This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

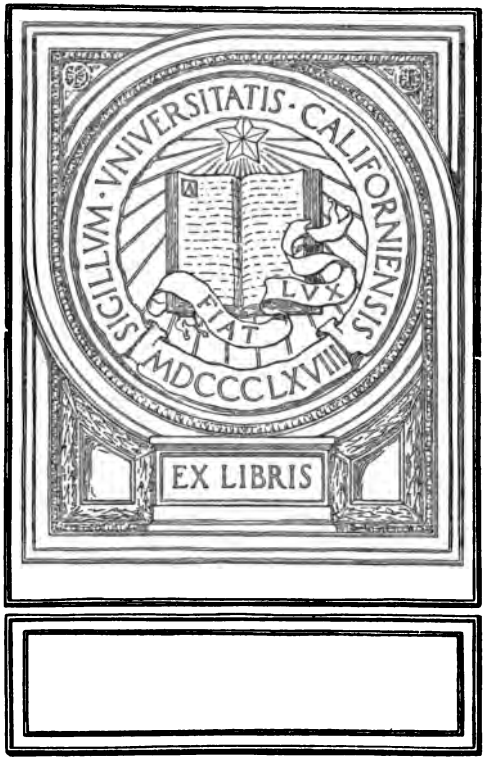
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF

CHARLES SHELDON FRENCH

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

The Worship *of* *The* Golden Calf.

A Story *of* Wage-Slavery *in* Massachusetts.

By

Charles Sheldon French.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

DALTON, MASS.:
C. Sheldon French, Publisher,
35 John Street.

PITTSFIELD. MASS.:
William J. Oatman, Printer,
536 North Street.
1908.

Digitized by Google

955
F873r
WOR

COPYRIGHT,
1908,
BY CHARLES SHELDON FRENCH.

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

NOTE.—Since Chapter VIII was written Massachusetts law has been so amended that $10,000, instead of $5,000, may now be collected for a human life lost through the negligence of a railroad or street railway corporation.

M126786

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER I.

THE snows had begun to disappear from the far-famed valleys of Berkshire; the mountain-tops and slopes were still white; in the softening air was the promise of the return of birds and flowers; Nature was relenting from her winter harshness, but man was less kindly than Nature.

On Beauna Vista, one of the hillocks rising slightly above the level of the Housatonic Valley, the day's work was done, and John Wycliff, a farm-laborer, was awaiting the pay for his last month's work before returning home.

There was nothing prepossessing about Wycliff's appearance. Short of stature, minus one eye which he had lost in an encounter with the Indians, with a bent nose, a souvenir of a cattle-stampede on the plains,—he was tough and wiry as a lynx, and his features betrayed almost as little emotion as that animal.

His experience had been largely of a

Digitized by Google

UNIV OF CALIFORNIA

kind to make him suspicious of his fellows, and alert for self-defence. He had knocked about the East in a variety of occupations, and in the West had been editor, cow-boy and gold-miner. He had seen varying fortunes, having been once part owner of a gold mine. He had lost all and was now a common laborer again. Although he still retained his interest in the mine, it was considered worthless. He had hopes that sometime it might become valuable again through the invention of cheaper methods of separating the gold from the rock.

Jacob Sharp, the farm-superintendent, was, in appearance, a typical Yankee. He was tall and angular, with blue eyes, which sometimes kindled with a kindly light, but which oftener showed a steely luster suggesting something of the serpent. The nose was the most prominent feature. It was large and sharply defined, and he had a habit, when excited, of blowing it vigorously.

On this occasion a trumpet-like blast first warned John Wycliff that Boss Sharp

Digitized by Google

had something on his mind. He blew his nose loudly several times, while the blue eyes seemed to retreat more deeply into their sockets and to give out a snaky leer. After an unusually loud blast, which testified to the healthy condition of his lungs, he pulled some bank-notes from his pocket.

"Twenty-five dollars," he said, handing the notes to Wycliff. "I have retained five dollars for Mr. Bothan on the bill which you owe him."

"But you agreed to pay me thirty-five dollars per month," replied Wycliff." "I am very poorly situated at this time for losing any part of my earnings. I should be glad to pay all my debts in full at once, but at present my wages will barely supply the necessities of life for my family." Then, turning to Mr. Bothan, who stood near by, he continued, "Both law and gospel make it a man's first duty to provide for his family. Besides, you should have no preference over my other creditors."

But the words were wasted. Wycliff

Digitized by Google

might as well have appealed to the flint boulders on the mountain side. Sharp insisted that he had agreed to pay him only thirty dollars per month, and he also insisted on paying five dollars of that sum to Richard Bothan on Wycliff's debt. He even threatened to discharge Wycliff if the latter should take advantage of the Bankruptcy Law and thus place Mr. Bothan on a level with other creditors. Wycliff received twenty-five dollars and walked away.

Mr. Sharp then passed a five dollar note to Mr. Bothan, who returned him one of smaller denomination with the remark, "Here's a dollar for collecting."

The men then separated, unconscious that there had been any witness of their conversation. Only a few steps distant, where a rustic watering-trough was hidden from sight by a clump of low hemlock bushes, two horseback-riders, a lady and a gentleman, had paused to let their horses drink.

"What a spectacle that is!" exclaimed the gentleman; Congressman Baldwin,

Digitized by Google

one of the owners of this farm, belongs to the national legislative body which passed the Bankruptcy Law, and here we see his foreman threatening to discharge a workman for accepting the benefits of that law. The law is designed to relieve those who are unable to pay their debts. Congressman Baldwin is sworn to uphold the law. His foreman, Jacob Sharp, is doing his best, in this instance, to destroy the law. I don't believe David Baldwin, the Congressman, would feel very proud of his foreman if he witnessed this scene."

"Would his brother and partner, Zechariah Baldwin, approve of it?" asked the lady.

"I cannot say," replied the gentleman. "Zechariah Baldwin has less sense of justice or love for his workmen than his brother David. But this is a mean act, at any rate. Mr. Sharp has no moral or legal rights to withhold the workman's wages and it is contemptible at this time, because Mr. Wycliff has a child very sick and needs every dollar he can earn. I

Digitized by Google

am surprised that such a man as Sharp, who is notorious for cheating his workmen, should hold so high a position in the church."

"It is much easier to criticise the church than to help in the good work which the church is doing," answered the lady tartly.

"We have a right to criticise the church if she fails to take up the work which the Master left for her to do;" replied the gentleman, but the lady was offended, and the remainder of the journey was passed in silence.

Meanwhile John Wycliff found little to comfort him on his return home.

"Robert has been growing worse all day;" were the first words of his wife: "The Doctor gives very little encouragement. He says that to-night will decide and that he is so frail and sensitive that we must gratify all his whims. Whatever he wants we must promise to get it for him. The Doctor says we must not cross him the least bit in any of his wishes."

Digitized by Google

The wife and mother—a slight, sensitive thing—dropped upon her knees, buried her face in the bed-clothes, and prayed for her son in words which reached no ear but the Almighty's. Then she lay down upon a couch, exhausted by days and nights of watching.

The mother slept. The boy lay for the most part quietly, his spirit fluttering as lightly as a butterfly's wing between life and death. The father sat beside the crib where his child lay, and watched his every movement, bending down frequently and placing his ear close to the little sufferer's face, to learn if he were still breathing. Once he woke his wife hurriedly, thinking that the end had come. But life still lingered.

There was a distant rumble of wheels. John Wycliff recognized the sound of that vehicle, and it made him for the moment desperate Some of the rough points of his Western life had ingrained themselves in his nature, and one characteristic memento of that strenuous time was at hand in a bureau-drawer.

Digitized by Google

He glanced at his wife. She was in a sound sleep. He bent down and eaught the sound of the boy's breathing. Then he sprang to the bureau and rushed, coatless and hatless, into the street.

Jacob Sharp was alone on his way to the mid-weekly evening prayer meeting. When he came into the shaft of light thrown from the sick-room window, his horse was grasped by the bridle, while a low voice said : "Pay me the wages you defrauded me of !" and a pistol gleamed in Sharp's face.

"Be quick !" the voice added, as Mr. Sharp's right hand went up, as was his habit when excited, to blow his nose. The hand dropped quickly to his pocket, and a ten-dollar note was handed over.

"Take legal action about this if you choose, Mr. Sharp," said Wycliff. "I can land you in prison and for more than one offense."

"Say nothing, and I will say nothing ;" replied Sharp as he drove on. Wycliff's challenge uncovered a chapter in Sharp's history which he had fancied

Digitized by Google

covered up and which he did not wish exposed. This adventure filled only a very brief time, and again Wycliff was by the bedside.

The little lips moved feebly. He placed his ear close to them.

"Pop—will I—have—pony—cart—heaven ?"

It was with great difficulty that he gathered the words. Heaven! What did he know about heaven? What did he care about it if such men as Jacob Sharp and Richard Bothan were its representatives here on earth? But he answered instantly, recalling the doctor's warning, and bending close to the child's ear:

"Yes, you will have everything you want there."

And then, very slowly and very feebly —so slowly and so feebly that his coarse senses could hardly be sure of the scarcely whispered words—came the question:

"Pop—will I—ever—have—pony—cart —here ?"

There was but an instant's hesitation,

Digitized by Google

as the father recalled his inability to fulfil his promise, and he replied, watching his child's face as the fluttering spirit caught the meaning:

"Yes, Robbie, if you will stay with us you shall have a pony and a cart."

This had been the height of the child's desire, his highest idea of happiness, his heaven—to have a pony and a cart. In sight of the other shore, and with voices, perhaps, which his father's coarse ear could not hear, calling him thither, he was willing to stay on this side if his desire might be gratified.

The father thought he saw the slightest trace of a smile on the thin face. The boy slept. More than once there were brief intervals when the father could not detect his son's breathing, but as the hours wore away there seemed to be a gain.

Meanwhile the father's memory was busy. As a lightning-flash, in the night, for an instant illuminates the entire landscape, so his son's question flashed his whole life in review before him. He re-

Digitized by Google

called the day, when, with high ideals, he had pledged himself to Christ in the little country meeting-house, and the church had pledged friendship to him. Later some of these comrades in the church had defrauded him of all he possessed. To-day the worst enemies of himself and of every other workingman in the town of Papyrus, were pillars in the fashionable church of that place. These things stood out in bold relief to-night, as bold as the mountain's rugged outline when the lightning's flash illumines it.

"The First Church of Papyrus," Wycliff had once said to Deacon Surface, "does not stand for righteousness. It will whitewash any wrong done by its wealthy members. Our pastor is eloquent in condemning the disfranchisement of the negroes of the South, but does not say one word to condemn the disfranchisement of mill-hands in Papyrus. Employees in the Baldwin Mills are prevented from voting appropriations for schools, roads, street-lights, and other

Digitized by Google

public benefits in their own town. To be consistent, you should place the sign of the Almighty Dollar on the pinnacle of your beautiful church, and inscribe over the altar these words: 'The rich can do no wrong.' "

Deacon Surface, who belonged, body and soul to the Baldwins, had been horrified at Wycliff, whom he regarded as little better than an infidel. Wycliff regarded Deacon Surface and his kind, as followers of the Master only for the 'loaves and fishes.'

But the night wore away. The boy was better. The mother was worn out, and Wycliff remained at home to care for his wife and child.

Jacob Sharp was an early caller.

"Your position will be open to you, at thirty-five dollars per month, whenever you can come back;" he said.

But Wycliff was never to return.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

"GOOD afternoon, Mr. Moriarty."

It was Deacon Surface who spoke, a gentleman who owed such influence as he possessed to the fact that he was an agent of the Baldwins, collecting their rents, superintending in a general way some of their enterprises, and administering their local charities.

He was a man of excellent intentions, but shallow. One of his best friends thus described him:—"The Deacon has as many sides as a barrel. He doesn't want to make any enemies, but when he is cornered, he will roll toward the money every time. If the Deacon were a judge, and a man were brought before him charged with stealing one hundred dollars, and the charge were proved, he would order the money divided equally between the thief and his victim. That is just about his idea of justice."

The Deacon's critics, if put in his place, would perhaps do no better than

Digitized by Google

he. Being the personal and confidential agent of the Baldwins, he must accept their ideas of right and wrong, adopt their conscience, as it were, or else surrender a fat job such as seldom comes to a man of common ability.

"The top of the afternoon to you!" replied the Irishman addressed, whose traits were quite different from the Deacon's.

"Of course you are going to vote for Jacob Sharp for Selectman," remarked the Deacon.

"The divil a bit will I vote for Jake Sharp for any office, Deacon Surface."

"Indeed, Mr. Sharp is a fine Christian gentleman."

"Do yez call the likes of old Jake Sharp, the slave-driver, a fine Christian gentleman? A liar, a thief, and a murderer is what he is."

Good Deacon Surface was shocked.

"Those are pretty hard names to apply to a neighbor, Mr. Moriarty. I think you would find it very difficult to prove that Mr. Sharp is what you call him."

Digitized by Google

"Indade I would not," replied the indignant son of Erin. "A liar? Did he ever pay a man the wages he agreed to? Not if he could help it. Didn't young Mike Silk knock him down flat in his tracks before Old Sharp could remember that he promised to pay him two dollars a day in haying? He remembered it all right after Mike flattened him. Oh, it's a bad memory he has, all right.

"A thief? Sure it's yourself he was after st'aling a shovel from. And sure it's your own memory needs bracing up, too. It's your own shovel he was st'aling, whittling off your name and branding on his own with a red-hot iron. Forgot all about it, have yez? Do yez forget the time when he stole his own daughter's money, that he was guardian for, and lost it, and the poor girl was nigh going crazy over it? It's surely a poor memory ye has, Deacon Surface.

"A murderer? I haven't forgotten the day when he hurried young Pat Flynn in the hay-fleld till the poor fel-

Digitized by Google

low dropped dead by the side of me with sun-stroke. I niver shall forget it in this world. And when David Baldwin, the Congressman, asked Sharp why did he hurry the lad such a hot day, wasn't the old villain after saying it was liquor that killed him? And the poor lad never tasted liquor. If that wasn't murder, what would yez call it? An awful poor memory yez have, all at once, Deacon Surface.

"And ye've forgot, too, how old Sharp sold the dis'ased meat in the city, haven't yez? Ye've forgot intirely how two children were killed by that same meat, so the doctors said? And that is what yez call a fine Christian gentleman in the First Church, is it?"

"But the meat charge was never proved," protested Deacon Surface.

"And it's yerself knows as well as anybody why it wasn't proved—because Zach Baldwin wanted it hushed up. It can be proved to-day if John Wycliff and meself, and one other man I could name, were called as witnesses."

Digitized by Google

Deacon Surface realized that he was not gaining ground, and changed his tactics.

"You had work on Congressman Baldwin's new streets at Maple Heights, last fall, did you not?"

"Indade I did, and I earned ivery cint I got, too, so I did, Deacon Surface."

"But there will be no work at Maple Heights this year unless Mr. Sharp is elected Selectman."

"Maple Heights may go to Perdition. I'll not vote for old Jake Sharp if I niver get another day's work from the Baldwins. The likes of yerself cannot drive Dave Moriarty one inch. Ye may stand there and threaten till doomsday. I'll not vote for that slave-driver, Sharp. He ought to be behind the bars."

Deacon Surface moved on, to appeal to workmen who would "hear to reason," as he expressed it.

As for David Moriarty, he hurried over to his neighbor, John Wycliff, to tell him of this latest game of the Baldwins. He had barely left Wycliff's, to return, when

Digitized by Google

Hugh Maxwell called to see John Wycliff.

This gentleman was fully as easy and gracious in his manner, fully as well qualified to get through the world without provoking opposition, as Deacon Surface; but, unlike the Deacon, he had to depend upon his own resources, with no millionaires to back him. He had a good business as a retail merchant, and in building up his trade had won many friends and very little enmity. Mere formalities over, Mr. Maxwell asked:

"What would be my chances in a campaign against Jacob Sharp?"

"If it were a perfectly fair election, they ought to be the very best," replied Wycliff. "The workingmen, who form the large majority of the voters of Papyrus, are favorable to you. But Mr. Sharp is the candidate of the millionaire paper-makers, and they practically own the town. You know the methods which the Baldwins will use as well as I do. Coaxing and threatening, of the kind which Deacon Surface knows so well how to use, will have their effect. Any

Digitized by Google

employee of the Baldwins who openly advocates your election will lose his job. The Baldwins are already promising employment if you are defeated, and threatening to take away employment if you are elected. Work on the new streets at Maple Heights, will not be the only job held up to the unemployed as a bribe and a threat in this election. The cry is already raised by the Baldwin agents: 'Elect Sharp, and the Baldwins will build a sewer for Papyrus; defeat Sharp, and the Baldwins will defeat the sewer.' This cowardly sort of bribery and threat is permitted by Massachusetts Law, and the Baldwins know full well how to use it. Still, if you wish to run against Sharp for Selectman, I will place your name before the voters of Papyrus, through the columns of the Elmfield *Star.*"

Wycliff obtained from Hugh Maxwell a few facts which he needed, and his caller departed; not, however, without leaving a ten-dollar note, in appreciation of the service which Wycliff was to un-

Digitized by Google

dertake for him. Wycliff then attended to household duties, and performed little services for the sick ones, who were improving very slowly.

Then he wrote a letter to the *Star*, advocating Hugh Maxwell's election as Selectman. The task was a pleasant one. He mentioned Mr. Maxwell's lifelong residence in Papyrus; his courtesy,—"He is always and everywhere a gentleman; his honesty,—"Who ever heard Hugh Maxwell's word questioned in the smallest particular?"—his qualifications for office from a business point of view,—"The man who has built up, from nothing, a good business of his own, has some qualities needed in the public service;" his popularity,—"He has the good will alike of the employer and the workingman."

Experience had taught Wycliff the folly of exaggeration, and his nomination of Hugh Maxwell for Selectman was recognized by readers of the *Star* as a correct description of the man, and not overdrawn.

Digitized by Google

Wycliff's home duties were interrupted in the evening by another aspirant for political honors—Herman Schuyler, an extensive farmer, and also a dealer in a variety of goods. In one respect Schuyler was the only honest man of means in Papyrus. He had broken all known records by appearing at the office of the assessors of Papyrus, and demanding that ten thousand dollars be added to his assessed valuation.

"I am worth fifty thousand dollars," he had said to the Assessors. "My property will sell for that, to-day. I am not so mean as to be unwilling to pay a tax on every dollar God has given me."

Herman Schuyler was the most liberal employer in the town of Papyrus. It was not unusual for him to pay a higher wage to a workman than had been agreed upon, if the workman earned it. But he was accustomed to giving orders, and having them obeyed promptly. He wanted a service from Wycliff, and he called for it very much as he would have ordered a roast or steak at the butcher's.

Digitized by Google

"I want to run for Assessor. I want you to write a letter to the *Star* in my favor. I want you to write it, because there is nobody, not even Congressman Baldwin himself, who can put words together as you can. Understand, now, I am not asking you to vote for me. A man has got pretty low down, in my own opinion, when he will ask another man to vote for him. I want my name placed before the voters in the columns of the *Star*, and I ask you to do it, very much as I would ask a lawyer to make out a mortgage or a deed for me."

The speaker was a heavy, square-built man, clad to-night, as he usually was at this season, in a bearskin coat, which he did not remove. When he made a point, in speaking, the square jaws closed like a trap, and he brought a muscular fist down heavily upon the arm of the rocker in which he was seated.

"Well, Mr. Schuyler," Wycliff replied at length, "I will do my best for you, and it will be a congenial task. Everything that I know of you is in your favor; but

Digitized by Google

I fear that your very honesty will be used against you. Our leading citizens do not want a thoroughly honest man in the office of Assessor. They want the property of the town assessed at only a fraction of its true value, so that the town will not have to bear its just share of state and county taxes. It is strange that men who are leaders in the church and in society, will argue the longest for a dishonest valuation."

"If I am elected Assessor," exclaimed Schuyler, and he brought his fist down upon the rocker-arm so that everything about him shook, "I shall be true to my oath. It is strange, as you say, that Christian men will defend the violation of an oath. Every assessor swears that he will 'neither overvalue nor undervalue' property for taxation."

Then Schuyler presented to Wycliff certain facts which he wished embodied in the letter:—How he came to Papyrus forty years before, with only a dollar in his pocket, and had built up his present fine property by industry and fair dealing.

Digitized by Google

"I tell you what," he said, as his hearer excused himself to perform some service for the sick ones, "You write the letter to-morrow, when you have leisure. I'll drive over in the evening and get it. By the way, how's your coal-bin?"

"Pretty low," replied Wycliff.

"Very well," said Schuyler, "I'll send a ton to-morrow and a receipt by the driver. Good night."

And out into the night went this last candidate for political honors.

"A pretty good day financially, my dears," said Wycliff, as he kissed his wife and son, and made everything secure for the night.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

"JOHN, do you know where Pulpit Rock is?"

"Indeed I do. It's two or three miles into the Wilderness."

"How near can you drive to it?"

"Perhaps within a quarter of a mile. There's an old wood-road, which perhaps runs as near as that to Pulpit Rock. The road is very rough, gullied out by water. There might be some danger of breaking a carriage in it."

"Never mind. I'll run the risk. Be ready in fifteen minutes."

It was black-eyed Eva Baldwin who gave the order, and within an hour they had left the public highway, and were following the ancient and unused wood-road through the Wilderness. The wheel of the buckboard bounded high over stones that blocked the way, and then dropped as suddenly into deep holes worn by the freshets. The riders often dodged or bent low to avoid being brushed from

Digitized by Google

their seats by branches of trees. It was very far from being a pleasant ride, but never a word of complaint from the lady.

She was anxious to secure the earliest blossoms of the fragrant trailing arbutus, to grace the pulpit on the morrow.

She might send some rare and costly flowers from the greenhouse, but every one of the Baldwin greenhouses would contribute to the decoration of the church, and she, being fond of wild flowers and of nature at first hand, wished to bring something direct from the Wilderness.

Eva Baldwin was a sister of David and Zechariah Baldwin, and was worth a couple of millions easily, but she never realized how poor she was until the eloquent young clergyman, the Reverend Ralph Cutter, came to preach at the First Church.

"Many a poor girl," she said to an intimate friend, "is richer that I am, in the love of a good honest man."

If the Reverend Ralph Cutter had made any advances in her direction, he would have been met, frankly and hon-

Digitized by Google

estly, by a good true woman. She admired the new preacher the moment she first saw him, and that admiration grew with every service of his which she attended, and with every opportunity for becoming acquainted with him.

The coachman noticed the fire in the black eyes, as she alighted.

"You see that path?" he asked. "It leads through a hemlock grove, over a flint ledge, and into a little valley beyond. Pulpit Rock is across the valley from the ledge. The earliest arbutus is found across the valley, on the slope below Pulpit Rock, among scattered bushes. Shall I help you?"

"Oh, no; I'll find it easily," she replied, and taking the basket which the coachman handed her, she followed the path, humming a favorite song, and was soon out of sight in the hemlocks.

On that same Saturday morning the Reverend Ralph Cutter entered the Wilderness from the opposite direction. Perhaps none of those who listened to the impassioned and earnest appeals of

Digitized by Google

the young minister, knew that he helped to keep both his spiritual life and his oratorical powers at white heat by this weekly journey to the Wilderness, where he spent an hour in secret prayer and in speaking to the rocks and trees from the text he was to use on the morrow.

Leaving the public road, he made his way through the Wilderness, along a path not very well marked, through somber groves of pine and hemlock, through other groves of red oak, rock maple and beech, across brooks, among large flint boulders, and through tracts where the wood had been cut off, and the thorny blackberry canes had taken its place. Part of the way the snow still covered the ground, and part of the way the floor of the Wilderness was carpeted with the blooms of the hepatica, or liverwort, with here and there an early blossom of the trailing arbutus.

He made the same journey each Saturday, that he might be alone for secret prayer, where he expected no interruption and also where he might, in the free-

Digitized by Google

dom of the Wilderness, give the morrow's sermon. I do not mean that he would use the same words on Sunday that he hurled at the white birch trees and flint boulders on Saturday. But the ideas would be the same. He never used any written sermon.

One of his deacons once said of him :— "He seems to have everything connected with his subject so completely under his control, that he has only to reach out and grasp the idea that comes next, and hurl it at you with the force and speed of a thunderbolt. We used to have sleepy hearers. I have seen no one nodding under Ralph Cutter's preaching. We used to have complaints from people who were h a r d of hearing. Ralph Cutter seems to think it is a part of his business to make the people hear."

How much of Ralph Cutter's power on Sunday was due to his hour of prayer in the Wilderness, and to his Saturday sermon to the crags and bushes from Pulpit Rock, I cannot tell.

He was heavy-hearted to-day, and the

Digitized by Google

first words which were echoed back to him by the flint ledge across the valley were these :—

"This is my farewell to you. There are people in this church who attempt to dictate what I shall say from this pulpit. Not only do they attempt to dictate what I shall say here, but they attempt to dictate my actions outside. They tell me that I must not exercise the right, belonging to every citizen, of expressing my opinions in private or public, on questions of public policy.

"There is no person on this earth rich enough, or powerful enough, to dictate what I shall say, or what I shall not say, as a preacher of the gospel. You may have this pulpit, and you may secure, to fill it, some one who will be your slave; but I will wear no other bonds than those of the Master, whether in the pulpit or out, and no man, even though he be a thousand times a millionaire, will shape my words or actions, as a minister of the gospel, or as a private citizen."

There was much in Ralph Cutter's

Digitized by Google

mind that did not find expression in words. He had been disgusted with the First Church in Papyrus, or rather with its bosses, before he had been with it a fortnight. Only the magical charm of a pair of black eyes, and the lovable personality behind them, had made life in the Paper Town endurable to him. Recently Zechariah Baldwin had given the young preacher plain notice that if he continued to occupy the pulpit of the First Church, he must cut out some of his pet hobbies from future sermons. He must cease to meddle with the relations between labor and capital, both in the pulpit and out—and, in short, he must omit everything which could possibly offend the Honorable Zechariah. This dictation the young preacher positively refused to submit to.

He tried to imagine the changed attitude of the people toward him at the close of to-morrow's sermon. There would be faces averted from him which had always before been friendly. There would be hands withheld which had al-

Digitized by Google

ways before sought his in friendly greeting.

There was one peculiarly sharp thorn in this thorny affair. How he wished that those searching black eyes did not belong to a member of the "Royal Family", as the Baldwin family was sometimes called.

Nature was not disturbed by his eloquence. A hawk sailed with unmoved wings, in mighty circles, high above him. The noisy blue jays were mobbing an owl in the oak grove close by. The blossoms of the trailing arbutus were as lavish of their fragrance as if no one in the world were troubled, or perplexed, or in love.

All unconscious that any human being was within hearing, the preacher continued :—

"When I first came to Papyrus I delivered a sermon against the disfranchisement of negroes at the South. After the service a workingman asked me why I did not ask a full and free ballot for the white paper-maker of Massachu-

Digitized by Google

setts, as well as for the negro cotton-planter of Mississippi? I was much surprised when the workman told me that mill-hands in Papyrus, who are legal voters, do not have a full vote in town-government, and cannot secure it.

"I have since investigated actual conditions here, and find that the Papyrus mill-hand, even if he owns his home, cannot vote appropriations for schools, highways, street-lights, sewers, and other public improvements for which he is taxed. The mill-hand, it is claimed, is given two hours in which to attend town-meeting. That period of two hours always includes the dinner-hour. The trip to and from the town-hall, in some cases, takes nearly the whole of the two hours.

"TWO HOURS for the rightful monarch of Papyrus to say how the town shall be governed! A two-hour limit to prevent the real creator of all your wealth from saying how that wealth shall be taxed! TWO HOURS limit for a free citizen of the grand old Commonwealth of Massa-

Digitized by Google

chusetts on Town-Meeting-Day—the day that taught New England to be free! In reality, not two hours, not one hour. Barely time for the rightful monarch to mark a ballot for town-officers and return to the mill, while the usurper remains and dictates what sums shall be spent by the town for schools, highways and other needs.

"I have consulted one of the best lawyers in the state. He says: 'The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not guarantee to its mill-hands, who may be legal voters, the right to vote in town affairs. The paltry two-hour provision only makes a farce of free government in mill-towns. It does not apply to town-meetings. In some towns the workman's full rights are secured by shutting down the mills on town-meeting day, and in others by holding the business meeting, for appropriations, in the evening. But where the town authorities and the employers, as in Papyrus, are both opposed to allowing the mill-hands to vote on appropriations, they have no

Digitized by Google

legal remedy. The political leaders, or bosses, of the State have been asked to correct the law, but they say the matter is of no importance,—as if anything could possibly be more important than the principle of equal rights, upon which our nation is founded."

"And this," shouted the speaker in the Wilderness, "this is the boasted equal rights of Massachusetts. I do not wonder that you, manufacturers of Papyrus, are ashamed,—so ashamed that you have forbidden me to mention this subject in the pulpit,—so ashamed that you have muzzled every newspaper within fifty miles, even the usually independent Springdale *Democrat.* You ought to be ashamed. The State of Massachusetts, which disfranchises its own workmen, while demanding political equality for the Southern negro, ought to be ashamed."

Soon after Miss Baldwin left the coachman heard a voice, and fearful for her safety, hurried to the ledge, where he saw and heard the speaker. He did not stay long, but long enough to learn that

Digitized by Google

it was the minister's farewell, and a very unusual discourse.

"My last word to you," rang out the powerful voice across the valley, "shall be in favor of a pure church. Ask on the street, for the worst libertines and adulterers in town, the wreckers of happy homes, the men whose social life is a stench,—and members of this church, protected by their wealth, will be pointed out to you. Search for the employers most unjust to their workmen, and you will find them sheltered by this church. My parting advice is, to purify your church,—to drive out of it the thieves and adulterers, or to cease calling it a church of Christ."

The lady returned with a basket of arbutus, but there was no song on her lips, and the fire had burned out of the black eyes.

"John," she said, "drive me to the home of the Widow Fordyce. She is sick and may be glad of these flowers."

To an acquaintance, that evening, the coachman said:—"If you want to hear

Digitized by Google

Reverend Ralph Cutter's farewell and the greatest sermon ever preached in Papyrus, go to the First Church to-morrow."

The news spread rapidly, and Ralph Cutter was surprised when he met a congregation for which the building could not furnish standing-room. But even those in the street heard him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

CONDITIONS improved steadily with the Wycliffs. Mrs. Wycliff and Robert were both gaining slowly, but surely. From various sources, some of them unexpected, came sufficient income to pay all bills promptly when due. Wycliff had dabbled in literature since boyhood, and his income from this source, though small, was helpful.

While he was still at home, helping about the house, and frequently consulted by Hugh Maxwell, and by those whose political fortunes were linked with his, a stranger called. He was a keen-looking man, who wasted no time in ceremony.

"John Wycliff, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am Wilfrid Terry, of the Elmfield *Star*. We are not satisfied with our sales in Papyrus. We sell only a thousand papers here, whereas we ought to sell fifteen hundred. We are told that you

Digitized by Google

have had experience in newspaper work, and a gentleman who is acquainted with your former work, thinks you could bring our sales in Papyrus up to what they ought to be."

"I don't believe that I could work for you."

"Indeed, and why not?"

"As I have learned it, good journalism is no respecter of persons. I could not, or rather I would not, work under your system, which tells the truth about the poor man, but conceals the truth about the rich man."

"I don't understand you."

"I can tell you in a way that you will understand," replied Wycliff sharply: "When Rudolph Hartland, a small contractor, had trouble with his workmen, and a dozen of them went on a strike, you devoted columns of valuable space to the occurrence; but when hundreds of employees in the Liberty Mill of the Baldwin Paper Company, struck against a cut in wages, your paper never mentioned it. Here was an important event, in which

Digitized by Google

the public had a vital interest, but you would not allow any reference to it in the paper. You have never allowed the facts to be presented in your publication regarding the partial disfranchisement of workingmen in Papyrus, by which all mill-hands are prevented from having any voice in town-government, except to vote for town-officers, being shut out from voting for appropriations. Only a short time ago you refused to publish Reverend Ralph Cutter's farewell sermon, the most notable sermon, perhaps, ever preached in Papyrus. Why have you refused publicity to these things, which the people want to know, and which the people are entitled to know? Simply because you are afraid of offending the Baldwins. You ought to wear a brass collar, with your owner's name on it."

John Wycliff's voice and features were not expressive. He could never have been an actor. But he was getting waked up, and a little light was creeping into his one lonesome, dull gray eye. Such expression as there was in his fea-

Digitized by Google

tures was of loathing and contempt. He looked as if he would have been glad to take up his visitor with a pair of tongs, deposit him gently in some out-of-the-way place, and cover him up so that he would not offend the senses of decent people.

"I didn't come here to listen to abuse of this kind," exclaimed Terry angrily.

"Never mind what you came here for," retorted Wycliff. "If you stay around me you will hear a grain of truth occasionally. There may be something to be said for a man like Deacon Surface, who serves the devil for a fat salary, but you serve him for nothing. The Baldwins despise you, as such men always despise their slaves, and the public despises you, too. And what do you get out of it? You complain that you are selling only one thousand papers in Papyrus. Why not give the facts that the people are entitled to know, and sell fifteen hundred?"

Terry was angry, but the money was what he was after, and possibly Wycliff

Digitized by Google

was right, after all, in what he said.

"Let's talk business," he said. "Come out to Lawyer Sturgis' office to-morrow, and we'll sign an agreement. If you can bring our circulation in Papyrus up to fifteen hundred copies, you shall have fifteen hundred dollars a year, and one year's salary guaranteed. You shall handle the Papyrus news and comment upon it as you see fit, so long as you do not render the publisher of the paper liable to an action at law. If we differ on this point, Lawyer Sturgis' decision shall be final."

"It's a bargain," said Wycliff, and his caller departed.

The details were arranged, and contract signed, the next day. A few evenings later Wycliff was sitting in what he humorously called his "office." It contained a few books, mostly for reference, a convenient desk, a small safe, a stuffed cougar, or mountain lion, from the Rockies, and a mounted moosehead from Maine—all of these things being reminders of more prosperous times.

Digitized by Google

M126786 955

Frowning upon all, and seemingly out of place, was a good likeness of Congressman Baldwin, of whom Wycliff had been a great admirer.

Answering a timid knock, Wycliff found a fellow-laborer at the door, a weak-minded French Canadian, a mere boy, who went by the name of "Half-witted Joe."

"How do you do, Joe?" he asked when his old comrade was seated.

"Mad."

"What is the trouble?"

"Mr. Sharp no pay me. He say me no worth ten dollars."

"Did he pay you anything?"

"Yes, five dollars for clothes."

"You worked one month?"

"Yes, he promise me ten dollars and board."

"I heard him."

"Me get up early; me work late—eight o'clock, sometimes. Me work hard. Mr. Sharp say me no earn only five dollars. Damn."

"What will you do?"

Digitized by Google

"Me go home, Canada."

"Have you money enough to take you home?"

"No. Me sell watch, five dollar."

He exhibited a watch, for which Wycliff thought he could safely pay that amount, and he handed Joe the money.

"Thank," said Joe, as he stepped over the threshold, "Me fix old Sharp."

"Don't hurt Mr. Sharp," Wycliff cautioned him. "Mr. Sharp has a good wife, and good children. Besides, you would go to prison."

The tone of his visitor changed. He seemed to realize that he had blundered in making the threat.

"Me no hurt Mr. Sharp," he finally promised, and then he went out into the darkness.

"Don't lose your money," was Wycliff's parting advice.

When he was out in the night again, Joe's anger kindled anew, as he remembered the farm-superintendent's injustice. Although Wycliff's warning prevented him from doing Sharp bodily

Digitized by Google

harm, he was still bent on revenge. Revenge was still the uppermost idea in Half-Witted Joe's unbalanced mind, as he approached Beauna Vista, and the dark night had its strong influence upon his thought and purpose.

He glanced in at the farm-house windows. The family and the farm-hands were busy reading. Mr. Sharp, he knew, had gone to a public meeting. The coast was clear. He stole around to the side of the barn farthest from the house. He went through an unused stable, to where the lower part of a great mow of hay was exposed.

There was the flash of a match, the sudden darting upward of the flames on the edge of the hay-mow, and then Joe hurried out through the yard, across the meadow, and reaching the railroad track, followed it to the edge of a piece of woods.

Here he halted, cowering in some bushes, and looked. He saw the light gleam from the big barn-doors, saw the flames break through the roof, saw the

Digitized by Google

inmates of the house rush out, and heard the alarm sounded from farm-house to farm-house. Soon a neighboring farmer rushed past Joe, on his way to the fire, and as the flames now lit up the landscape all around, Joe realized that he might be discovered, and passed on. But while he looked, he feasted his eyes as greedily as a former savage might have done, on the destruction of a pioneer home.

"Me fix you, Jake Sharp," he said, in a whisper, as he shook his fist in farewell at Beauna Vista. He did not realize that the loss fell upon others, and not upon Sharp. An hour later he was aboard a train on his way to Canada.

The farm-building which is fired is usually doomed. It could not be otherwise on this occasion, when the flames had their start in a forty-ton mow of hay, dry as tinder.

The farm-laborers first saved the horses. Their next move was such as might have been expected from excited men, unused to such emergencies—they began drag-

Digitized by Google

ging out the vehicles, until Mrs. Sharp, with more forethought than the men, exclaimed: "The cows! the cows next!"

"But we cannot get at the door of the cow-stable," the laborers protested.

"Take crowbars and break in the side of the barn!" she ordered, and under a woman's direction the work of rescue went on.

The fire-department of Papyrus responded tardily, owing to distance, and could do but little, except to protect the farm-house. Finally, as the glowing pageant lit up the landscape for miles in every direction, half the men of Papyrus were on the scene, but could do nothing except listen to the crackle of burning timbers, and the bellowing of imprisoned and roasting cattle.

John Wycliff knew very well that the Baldwins would not wish the story of the relations of Jacob Sharp and Half-Witted Joe published, but he considered that the public was entitled to know it. The story of the poor Canadian boy, and his treatment by Jacob Sharp, was told in the *Star*

Digitized by Google

as graphically as the story of the fire itself. In his narrative Wycliff made a clear distinction between known facts regarding the fire, and mere suspicions or rumors.

The *Tribune*, the *Star's* Elmfield rival, the property of Congressman Baldwin, made this announcement:—

"Not a clue is obtainable regarding the origin of the fire. Mr. Sharp, the foreman of Beauna Vista, is a man who always keeps the good will of his employees, so that not a shadow of suspicion can lie in that direction."

This way of dealing with news was entirely in harmony with the usual policy of the Baldwins, where their own interests were involved. There were several persons who were angry at the course taken by the *Star*. The Baldwins were angry, partly because they regarded it as an intrusion upon their private affairs and partly because the fire-story had dealt Sharp a hard blow in his fight for the office of Selectman.

As for Sharp, he threatened various

Digitized by Google

things, but his own attorney told him to "pocket his wrath and say nothing," as he could not maintain an action against the *Star*.

Terry was happy, as the sales of the *Star*, in Papyrus, had been lifted between two and three hundred, and the increase promised to prove permanent.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

"HOW are you and the lad, this morning, Mrs. Wycliff?" asked that good neighbor, Mrs. Clyde.

"Getting along nicely, thank you, and very glad to see you," replied Mrs. Wycliff. "But how does it happen that you are not working to-day?"

"The strike. Haven't you heard of the rag-cutters' strike? Three hundred rag-cutters walked out of the Baldwin Mills an hour ago."

"I didn't know that the Baldwins ever had a strike in their mills."

"They don't often have one, and when they do, the world at large does not know about it, they have such a strong grip on the newspapers about here. My son, Tom, works on the Springdale *Democrat*, and he has told me a lot about these things. Springdale is about fifty miles from here, and the *Democrat* pretends to be an independent newspaper, and yet it never prints any news from Papyrus

Digitized by Google

which can possibly hurt Congressman Baldwin. Some years ago, Tom began work as correspondent here for the *Democrat*, and there was a big strike here, in the Liberty Mill, which belongs to the Baldwin Paper Company. Tom didn't know any better then, and he sent them a long article about the strike. Not a word of it was printed, and the editor wrote Tom that they never printed any news of that kind about the Baldwins. Then the other Springdale paper, the *Universe*, is owned by Congressman Baldwin; so, of course, that does not print a word regarding troubles in the Baldwin Mills."

"But what was the cause of the strike to-day?" inquired Mrs. Wycliff.

"There were a good many things that had something to do with it," replied the neighbor, "but fines were the worst."

"Fines! Do you have to pay fines?" asked Mrs. Wycliff.

"Yes, in this way. Perhaps you do not understand how fast we have to work to earn what we get. We earn

Digitized by Google

about one dollar per day, and to do this we must cut in the neighborhood of one hundred and twenty-five pounds of rags. Now, in cutting these rags, if we overlook a button, or a bit of rubber, we are fined a pound of rags."

"That is, if you put in a piece of cloth having a button on it, no matter how small, you must cut an extra pound of rags, to punish you for overlooking that button. Am I right?"

"Yes, you have it exactly right, and it's just the same if I put in a piece of cloth which has a bit of rubber in it. And here, see here is a bit of cloth that came back to me this morning,—just this little bit of a letter, sewed into the cloth." And she showed Mrs. Wycliff a bit of white cloth, on which was a small initial, such as is used in marking garments.

"There are hundreds of pieces and consequently hundreds of motions we must make in cutting one pound of rags, for which we receive less than a cent. Working so rapidly as we are obliged to

Digitized by Google

do, to accomplish our day's task, is it any wonder that a piece of cloth, containing a button, or a bit of rubber, slips through our fingers unnoticed now and then?"

"And this is what the strike is about?"

"Yes, this is the main thing. We are willing to pay something of a fine for failure to notice rubber and buttons, but we think that the fine is now too heavy. There are some other things we don't like—some brutal bosses, not fit to drive oxen, let alone women. Our scythes are often poorly ground. The Baldwins seem to think anything is good enough for a woman to cut one hundred and twenty-five pounds of rags a day on. Sometimes it is very dark for our work."

"Is no light furnished at such times?"

"Never. The office force, or other departments of the mill, may have lights at noon of a cloudy day, but we are of no account. It is often too warm in our room. We don't need much heat because we have plenty of exercise. We must be kept too warm on account of the

Digitized by Google

'lookers over,' who don't have much exercise, except when they jump up on the tables, to get away from a mouse."

"Couldn't the 'lookers over' have a separate room, which could be kept warm enough for them, so that your room could be cooler and more comfortable for you?"

"I don't know. If the matter of fines is made right, we will say nothing about the rest. When we make complaints, we are usually told that the Baldwins could get machines to cut rags, cheaper than we cut them, and that they only hire us out of charity."

"I am surprised at the way the rag-cutters are treated," said Mrs. Wycliff; "I have always heard that the Baldwins were very generous."

"They are generous," replied her visitor, "but they are not just. There is an old saying, 'Be just before you are generous,' which, if lived up to in Papyrus, would make a wonderful difference in favor of the working class. How have the Baldwins made their millions? Of course

Digitized by Google

the whole world knows that they make a very high grade of paper. It is said that this is due, in some measure, to the pure water found in Papyrus, which is the gift of God. Then, too, it is claimed that Mack Baldwin laid the foundation of the Baldwin millions by manipulations in Wall Street, during the Civil War. But some of those millions are the fruit of low wages. If the Baldwins pay twenty-five cents a day less than a fair wage, to two thousand hands, three hundred days in a year, what is the result? It's a yearly saving of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, of money due the laborer, is it not? Then, perhaps, the Baldwins may spend fifteen thousand dollars a year in pensions to a very few, and in charity to the working class. Nothing can exceed the cleverness of the Baldwins, in making one dollar in charity, look bigger to the laborer, than ten dollars in wages withheld. I think the time is coming when the law will require the accounts of all such concerns as the Baldwin Paper Company, to be as open

Digitized by Google

as town accounts, and then the lion's share of profits will go to the laborer. But I guess you have had all the rag-room and paper-mill you want for one day."

"No, I have been very much interested, and I wish you women might get justice," replied Mrs. Wycliff. "I think there cannot be any harder or more disagreeable work in the mill than yours, and I wish that you might have better pay and kinder treatment. The Baldwins are well able to pay. I hear that this new library that Zechariah Baldwin is giving to the city of Elmfield will cost a half a million dollars."

"Yes, I try to restrain my anger, as a Christian woman should," said Mrs. Clyde, "but my blood boils every time I see that building. We poor women must slave in Zack Baldwin's rag-room, and the money which ought to go to the mill-help, in higher wages, is given, with a great flourish of trumpets, to the city of Elmfield, which is already rich enough. As to our work. If we try to work a bit

Digitized by Google

faster than usual, we are liable to get cut on the scythes, and there's many a terrible gash been got in the rag-room. Then how often do you hear of contagious diseases spread by the rags of a paper-mill.

"The worst slap the Baldwins ever got was from a wealthy Southern lady, who visited their mills last summer. She said to Zack Baldwin:—'The slaves on my father's plantation in Georgia, were treated with more consideration, and were more contented and happy at their work than your rag-cutters. But the slave-holding system was wrong, and it fell. I think also, the system under which you Northern millionaires eat the apple, and give your employees the core, is wrong and will fall, too,' But I have stayed too long." And Mrs. Clyde vanished.

John Wycliff sat in his den, within easy ear-shot, and the pith of the women's talk was woven into his account of the strike, for the *Star*.

More than two thousand copies of the

Digitized by Google

Star were sold that day in Papyrus, and its circulation was raised permanently to a point near those figures.

The Honorable Zechariah Baldwin was furious when he read the *Star's* account of the strike. Never before had a local newspaper dared to print the news of a Baldwin strike, much less to hold those "captains of industry" up to public criticism, as it had done to-day.

But Terry was happy. He had sold extra thousands of his paper, the largest edition ever sold of a Berkshire newspaper, and scores of citizens, in all walks of life, had congratulated him on his bravery in defying the Baldwins.

The most important result of the *Star's* article was that it was copied, more or less fully, by other papers throughout the country, owing to Congressman Baldwin's prominence as a public man. A strike in his mills is not a good asset for a Congressman, and David Baldwin telegraphed his brother, from Washington, to grant the rag-cutters' demands immediately. Zechariah Baldwin reluctantly

Digitized by Google

complied with the order sent by wire.

The Honorable Zechariah Baldwin appeared, a very angry man, at the office of the *Star*.

"I want you to discharge that Wycliff," was his first greeting to Mr. Terry, the proprietor.

"How long have you owned this office, that you assume to run my business?" rejoined Mr. Terry.

"But you know that we're not used to being treated as the *Star* treated us yesterday," protested the paper-manufacturer.

"Then the best thing that you can do is to get used to it," retorted the publisher, who was now beginning to get angry on his own account. "You've been treated as if you were superior beings, but you are no better than other people. I have been suppressing the truth about you millionaires for years, and losing thousands of dollars by doing so. I might have sold thousands of copies of the *Star*, in Papyrus and throughout the county, had I not truckled to you

Digitized by Google

Baldwins, like a dog, instead of being a man. Hereafter the truth is to be published about you, just the same as about other folks, and Wycliff is under contract to do it for a year. He is recommended as being entirely competent to deal with such cases as yours. Perhaps I shall go out and tell you how to run your mills. There's the door, Zack Baldwin," and the proprietor of the *Star*, now thoroughly angry, motioned the millionaire out.

But the lord of Papyrus, although more surprised than he had been before in years, was not to be thus easily thwarted.

"What will you take for your newspaper—for the entire plant?" he asked, in a more conciliatory tone.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars," replied the publisher, immediately, naming a price so far beyond its true value that he felt sure it would be declined.

"A pretty steep price, isn't it?" asked Baldwin.

"Who asked you to buy?" retorted Terry.

"Come over to Lawyer Stimson's and

Digitized by Google

draw the writings," said the paper-manufacturer, withdrawing.

Next day John Wycliff received this note:—

"MY DEAR WYCLIFF:

You're a jewel. I've sold the *Star* to Zack Baldwin for $25,000. (It's actual value is around $15,000.) I didn't even sign the usual agreement, not to engage in the same business again in the same city.

"Enclosed you will find check for $1,500, according to agreement by which I guaranteed you one year's salary.

"When I first met you, I thought you were a discourteous crank, but my finances and my self-respect were both badly in need of the rebuke which you gave me. Your way of dealing with such cattle as the Baldwins beats mine out of sight."

"Yours always,
WILFRID TERRY."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

"WHERE are you going, pop?" asked Robert, as Mr. Wycliff drove into the yard, with a horse and carriage, one fine morning.

"Going to take you and ma for a little ride into God's country," replied the father.

"But I thought everywhere was God's country," replied the little fellow in surprise.

"Surely," replied the father. "All this beautiful world is the Lord's, but He seems to have given the greater part of the land about here to the Baldwins, or perhaps it would be more nearly correct to say that He has allowed them to grab it. I expect to take you to-day to see a place, which seems to me to be more especially God's country, because He has not allowed one man, or one family, to get possession of all of it."

"And you think it is a better country?"

Digitized by Google

"Indeed I do, in some respects."

After passing out of the paper-manufacturing village of Papyrus, eastward, they came to a big, deserted, wooden mill, with many tumble-down houses near it.

"Say, pop, what village is this?"

"Sodom."

"And what is that old stone mill beyond?"

"That is Gomorrah."

"Quite a place for Bible names," broke in Mrs. Wycliff. "Those ruins of another old stone mill, also broken down and deserted, I suppose are Babylon?"

"Exactly so, my dear, and farther up stream we shall pass Tyre and Sidon, also broken down and deserted. This entire river-valley along here is often called the Valley of Desolation."

"Who owns it?" asked Mrs. Wycliff.

"The Baldwins, who bought it, for a very little, from the Quiet Valley Woolen Company."

"Why don't the Baldwins build paper-mills here?"

Digitized by Google

"I cannot tell you. It has always seemed to be the Baldwin policy to build up the other end of the town, at the expense of this end. Certainly the Baldwins have played the part of the 'dog in the manger,' in regard to East Papyrus. They will neither build mills here themselves, nor will they sell the property so that anyone else can build here. The Wessons, who own the paper-mills at Papyrus Center, would have built mills here, giving employment to a large number of people, if they could have secured the property. The Baldwins have already made plans for robbing East Papyrus of her water-power, which is all that this end of the town has left."

"But how can they do that?"

"Very easily. The water-power can be transformed into electricity, and then the electricity can be transferred by wire, to the Baldwin Mills, at the west end of the town. The plans are already made. It will increase the dividends of the Baldwin Mills, which already pay enormous profits, but it makes the pros-

Digitized by Google

pect for rebuilding East Papyrus much blacker than before."

"But wouldn't it be better for the town of Papyrus to have all its mills rebuilt and running at a fair profit, than to have a part of them running at an immense profit?" protested Mrs. Wycliff.

"Certainly; it is not the good of the town, but the enrichment of the Baldwins, which is to be considered. These shrewd financiers rarely spend a dollar, unless they feel sure that it will come back, leading several other dollars with it."

"But they gave that beautiful big building to the town, pop," put in Robbie.

"Yes. It cost the Baldwins one hundred thousand dollars, and it has cost the town twice that."

"How is that, pop?"

"In taxes lost. The Assessors say:—'we must tax the Baldwins lightly, because they are so generous to the town.' Some of the Baldwin properties are not assessed for more than one-third value,

Digitized by Google

an enormous loss to the town in taxes."

Soon they left the valley, and began to climb the mountain, still going eastward.

"Wild flowers, pop. Please hold up, and let me get some." The boy soon returned to the carriage, with his hands full of the blossoms of the coltsfoot, white, blue, and yellow violets, bell-flowers, and wake-robins. As they ascended the mountains, they found the trailing arbutus and the spring-beauty, which had bloomed earlier in the valleys.

A beautiful farm was reached.

"Who owns this?" asked Mrs. Wycliff.

"Thomas Bothan. He has retired from business, and spends some of his time here. I hope I may find him." Then, for the first time, he told his wife of the last day at Beauna Vista,—how Sharp and Bothan had conspired to keep back a part of his wages on Bothan's old debt. He had not dared to tell her at the time.

He soon found Mr. Bothan.

"I want a receipt in full," he said, as

Digitized by Google

he produced the money due Bothan, and then, taking leave of him, he added:—"The last debt I owe will be paid to-day, and I have paid every debt as fast as I was able to do so. You would have received yours just as promptly, had you not tried to take the bread away from my family to get it."

For a distance their route lay through a grand old forest of large trees. The boy was jubilant as he saw, first a striped squirrel, then a red one, then a gray, and then:—

"Oh, look quick, pop; what was that? It looked like a squirrel, but it flew, or rather it sailed, from one tree to another."

"A flying squirrel."

"And there's a rabbit. Oh, now I begin to see why you call this God's country."

About noon they reached their destination, the farm of Phillips Porter, in Sprucemont, where they were expected, and where a substantial meal was awaiting them.

Digitized by Google

"You have been very patient with me," said Wycliff, as he paid Porter about one hundred dollars, the last debt he owed. Mr. Porter told again to-day, (and he seemed to enjoy telling it,) the story of how he came to leave Papyrus.

"It was many years ago, and Mack Baldwin, father of the present generation of paper-makers, was in control, although Zechariah and David were young men then, just learning the business. The Baldwins were not then so completely in control of the town of Papyrus as they are now. Captain Bolton Wesson, who built the paper-mills at Papyrus Center, was a broader and better man than Mack Baldwin, and the two were often opposed to one another in town-affairs.

"Captain Wesson wanted the town-hall located at the Center, the natural and proper place for it, but Mack Baldwin demanded that it be built at the West End, the part of the town which he owned. At the approaching town-meeting, every employee of Mack Baldwin was warned to vote for locating the

Digitized by Google

hall at the West End. At the town-meeting Baldwin had spotters to take the names of any of his employees who voted against him. I was working in his mill then, but I voted for building the hall at the Center. Next morning I was called into the mill-office, where I met Mack Baldwin and his sons, Zechariah and David. David is the present Congressman.

"Mack Baldwin handed me my pay, at the same time calling me a vile name. Now, in those days I had never met a man who could handle me,—"

"They are not plenty, even now," said Wycliff, interrupting him.

"Perhaps not; but in those days I looked at such things in a different light from what I do now. Since then I have learned the gospel of forbearance, and to-day I almost despise mere brute force; but in those days I did not allow anyone to call me a vile name, and Mack Baldwin had scarcely spoken the word when he lay on the floor at my feet. The two sons interfered, but they followed their

Digitized by Google

father in double-quick time. I had the three wolves in a heap, in their own den, in much less time than I am telling you of it. Then the book-keepers interfered and followed their employer."

"But I was terribly frightened when I heard of it," said his wife. "I thought Phillips would have to go to jail. We were only engaged then."

"Of course I was arrested," continued Mr. Porter, "and taken before the district court at Elmfield. Judge Tuttle, who presided over that court, had been a colonel in the Union army, and lost a leg at Gettysburg. He despised Mack Baldwin, who made a million out of the government's distress, by gambling in stocks in Wall Street. The Judge listened patiently while all the evidence was given, although there seemed to me to be a far-away look in his eyes, as if he were thinking of the days when he and Captain Wesson were fighting for the Union, while Mack Baldwin was making a fortune out of the war at home.

Digitized by Google

"'Mack Baldwin,' said the Judge, 'you discharged the accused because he did not vote as you ordered him to, did you not?'" Baldwin could not deny it. 'And you called him a vile name, to boot?' continued the Judge. Baldwin admitted it.

"'Discharged,' thundered Judge Tuttle, as if he were again giving orders on the battle-field, and picking up his hat and cane, he stumped out of the court-house to dinner, while there were roars of applause in the room which he had left.

"Captain Wesson was in the court-room, so as to go bail for me if necessary, and I never saw a man more pleased than he was. He offered me work, if I wanted, but the girl I had left behind me, here in the country, didn't want to live in Papyrus, so I bought this farm, and I have never been sorry I did so. We are comfortably off here, and I do not have to ask how I shall vote. Many of the mill-hands in Papyrus are little better than slaves when it comes to vot-

Digitized by Google

ing. Under the Australian ballot, they may vote for the men they prefer for town-officers, but not for town-appropriations and other measures, without making themselves liable to the wrath of their employers. The Baldwins never ceased their ancient policy of discharging and driving out of town, if possible, any of their workmen who opposed their policy in town-affairs by voice or vote."

In the afternoon the entire party of Porters and Wycliffs drove to Twin Mountain, near by, there being a wood-road, almost to the summit, nearly as good as the average mountain highway.

Sixty miles eastward was Mount Wachusett, seen to-day very dimly, and only visible at all in the clearest weather. Nearer, guarding the Connecticut Valley, were Mount Tom and Mount Holyoke.

"Say, pop, what mountain is that?" It looks like a pyramid from here."

"That is Monadnock. What state is it in, Robbie?"

"In New Hampshire," answered the boy, proud to exhibit his knowledge of

Digitized by Google

the geography of the states hereabouts.

"And there, very dim, scarcely more than a blue line in the west, are the Catskills and Adirondacks. I don't believe you remember where they are."

"Surely I do. What did I go to school for? They are in New York."

"And that beautiful mountain close by. Can you tell the name of the highest mountain in our own state?"

"Greylock, or Saddle Mountain."

"We have a view here of portions of New York, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont, besides a large portion of Massachusetts."

"And this mountain-top is to be sold very cheap," said Mr. Porter. "Mr. Daniels, the owner, is in California, in poor health, and has directed me to sell it for fifteen hundred dollars. There are three hundred acres in the farm, one hundred acres being heavy wood and timber, one hundred and fifty acres pasture, and fifty acres good tillage land. The house is comfortable, and the barn excellent. But I hardly need to tell you,

Digitized by Google

as you are familiar with farms about here. Only for its location, so far from railroad, it would bring many times the price asked. As it is, it is the best bargain I know of. I would be glad to pay two hundred and fifty dollars for fifty acres of the pasture, which joins mine, but I don't want the whole."

"What do you say, ma?" asked Wycliff of his wife. "It's the best bargain I've heard of in many a day. We're not obliged to live on it, you know, we can rent it."

"Buy it if you think best," replied his wife. "We may be glad to use it for a summer home, if we are prospered."

"I'd like to live here the whole year," said Robbie. "It must be fine coasting here in the winter."

"We get snow in July from the Bear's Den," said Mrs. Porter.

"I will take the farm at fifteen hundred dollars, and you may have the fifty-acre tract on your own terms," said Wycliff.

Just then Robbie, who had wandered

Digitized by Google

a few rods in advance of the rest of the party, came running back.

"Oh, ma, come quick! Here are some deer, just like those we used to see on Mrs. Colt's grounds, in Hartford. Pop is right. This is God's country, all right."

Sure enough, there at the foot of the bluff were a half dozen of the beautiful creatures.

"They seem to understand that the law protects them," said Mrs. Porter. "Sometimes they come into the barnyard with the cattle."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

"ZECHARIAH, I want you to give Joel Byron his old place in the mill. I do not approve of discharging workmen for their politics."

"I shall do no such thing, Sister Eva. Byron was not discharged for his politics, but for attempting to create discontent among his fellow-workmen."

"The petition to the Selectmen, which Byron circulated, asking for an evening session of town-meeting, was a perfectly respectful one, was it not?"

"If you mean respectful to the Selectmen,—yes; if you mean respectful to us,—*no!*"

"How so?"

"We, who own the town, ought to say what its taxes should be. Our employees, who pay only poll taxes, should not vote taxes for us to pay. If the appropriations for town expenses were made at an evening session, as they are in some Massachusetts towns, our workmen could

Digitized by Google

vote, and load us down with taxes. Under Massachusetts law, mill-hands can remain away from their work only *two hours*. This law does not apply to town-meeting, but we give our workmen the benefit of it. Our workmen can come and vote for town-officers by secret ballot, and get back to the mills within the two hours. After they are safely away from town-meeting, and at work again, we pass the appropriations."

"You don't believe in popular government, then?"

"I don't believe that a man who pays only two dollars tax, should be the equal of one who pays ten thousand dollars taxes, when it comes to voting appropriations."

"But what would become of popular government, and of our free institutions, if your ideas prevailed?"

"I don't know and I don't care. You have about as much sense as a hen, Eva, when it comes to business."

"Have I? Very well. I have about as much influence as a hen, if you please,

Digitized by Google

in the management of the Baldwin Mills, although my father left me a two-million-dollar interest in these mills. Now, Zechariah, I have been a mere cipher in this business long enough. There is a New York gentleman who will gladly pay me every dollar my interest in the Baldwin Mills is worth. He will not be a cipher in the concern as I have been, and he has opinions of his own as to the rights of workingmen. He will not see his employees' interests trodden under foot without uttering a protest which will be heard, not only throughout the State, but throughout the Nation.

"I give you fair warning. One week from to-day, unless you and David make a fair division of the property with me, I shall deed my interest in the Baldwin Mills to the New Yorker. Don't say I didn't give you fair warning. You will have a partner, if I sell out, who will be able to protect both himself and his workmen. We'll see whether I have as much sense as a hen in this business."

The black eyes snapped fiercely, and

Digitized by Google

Eva Baldwin swept out of the room without giving her brother a chance to reply. He immediately summoned David home from Washington. The Congressman had often made peace between his brother and sister, but he found it impossible to patch up any kind of a truce this time. In vain he made promises.

"You've made promises before, David Baldwin, and then you've let Zechariah cheat the workingmen out of their votes again, just the same as before. You're standing before the country as the workingman's friend, when really you are an impostor. Some day the country will find you out. The man who stands by and sees his workmen defrauded of the right to vote appropriations for their own homes, is just as big a villain as the man who does the dirty work himself."

These were Eva Baldwin's plain words. Only one day was left of her week's notice, and still no agreement.

"You are not going to carry out your threat, are you Eva?" asked the Congressman.

Digitized by Google

"It is not a threat. I am simply not going to be a partner in this iniquity any longer. If I sell out it will be to a man who thinks as I do about the workman's rights. I'm ready to draw the papers."

"I think it is a bad move, both for you and for us," was the brother's reply; "but you have the advantage of us. Of course we cannot admit a stranger to ownership in the Baldwin Mills, so we make this proposition: Calling your interest two millions, we will give you the Liberty Mill, at one and one-half million dollars, and pay you the balance."

This offer was accepted and Eva Baldwin became owner of the Liberty Mill.

Town-meeting day arrived. The movement for an evening session had apparently died.

Back of the town hall was the office of Ford Hulbert, auctioneer and real estate agent. On the morning of town-meeting Hulbert's front entrance was closed, locked, and a curtain drawn. In the rear his office opened upon a long alley running back to an unfrequented street

Digitized by Google

called Back Lane. Had anyone watched Back Lane that morning from daylight to ten o'clock, he would have seen an occasional lonely voter pass quietly along the street, up the long alley, and into the rear door of Hulbert's office. They did not attract suspicion. One by one they passed in, like flies into a trap, but none of them came out.

Ten o'clock came. In the town-hall less than twenty voters were present, mostly Baldwin sympathizers. Every word spoken was heard in Hulbert's office.

"The time has arrived for calling this meeting to order," said the town clerk, who then read the warrant.

"Prepare your ballots for a moderator," commanded the Clerk. But now the rear door opened, and in filed forty voters from Hulbert's office. After the choice of a moderator and a few minor town-officers, Mr. Hulbert arose and said:—

"I move that this meeting, except the balloting for town-officers, be adjourned

Digitized by Google

to seven-thirty o'clock this evening."

"I second the motion," said John Wycliff.

A chorus of objections arose from the Baldwin party.

"Question!" shouted Hulbert with his auctioneer's lungs. "A motion to adjourn, Mr. Moderator, is not debatable."

"Question! question! question!" the forty followers yelled, at the top of their lungs.

"Right you are; a motion to adjourn is not debatable," said the Moderator, as soon as he could make himself heard. "You hear the motion; all in favor of adjourning this meeting to seven-thirty o'clock this evening, will signify it by saying *Aye;* contrary minds, *No.* It is a vote."

"Disputed! disputed!" the Baldwin forces yelled, as they now saw other voters coming, and hoped for reinforcements by delay.

"All in favor of this motion raise your right hands," said the Moderator. "I see forty-two hands. Now all opposed,

Digitized by Google

raise your right hands. I see seventeen hands. The motion is carried. This meeting is adjourned until seven-thirty o'clock this evening."

The trap of Ford Hulbert's setting had sprung neatly, and caught the Baldwins napping. It had been customary to adjourn until two o'clock, hence the small number present, and the ease with which Hulbert's strategy succeeded. For the first time in many years the mill-hands would have a chance to vote on the money to be spent for their schools, highways, and other expenses.

At the evening session Zechariah Baldwin took the floor, and said:

"It was a mean, contemptible trick to adjourn town-meeting to this hour. No decent man would take part in such a game."

Ford Hulbert sprang to his feet.

"Mr. Moderator: There is *one* gentleman by the name of Baldwin, whom we all delight to honor. Let us hear from our Congressman."

Amid cheers the Congressman rose

Digitized by Google

and said: "I am satisfied with this arrangement if it meets the popular will. Let us get to business."

He was too wise to show the anger which he felt.

The business of the town-meeting was marked out by a committee consisting of all the larger property-owners in the town, and one common laborer. It was through this "Financial Committee" that the Baldwins largely controlled town-meeting, and the one lonely laborer showed how lightly they esteemed the class that had made them wealthy.

To-day the improvement of a certain street, the home of laborers, was under discussion. Sheriff Burse, an agent of the Baldwins, arose, and in a husky voice, like the whisper of the wind thro' the pine woods, said that the Financial Committee did not approve the appropriation. True, a dozen vehicles had been overturned on that street recently, but, according to the Sheriff, it was the fault of the drivers. The matter was considered settled, when a sleepy-looking

Digitized by Google

little man arose and addressed the Chair.

"Uncle Jerry Barnaby," whispered the crowd. "There'll be fun now."

Uncle Jerry was the wit of the town. It is hard to define wit. In Uncle Jerry's case his appearance had much to do with the laughter which greeted him. He was a sad-looking, wild-eyed little man, whose "little body," as he expressed it, "was tired carrying around his big brain."

"Mr. Moderator."

"Mr. Barnaby."

"It is true, as Sheriff Burse has said, that a man may drive through Hodgson Street safely. By using great care, by dodging rocks and sand-banks, and by the special favor of Divine Providence, he may live to drive through that street; but I would advise him, before attempting it, to place a good big insurance on his life, and to kiss his wife and children farewell. As has been said, Mr. Moderator, a man may drive through Hodgson street safely; a perfectly sober man may drive through a wood-lot, but—"

Digitized by Google

In the uproar which followed, Uncle Jerry never finished his sentence. It was voted to repair Hodgson Street.

The secret balloting, during the day, elected Hugh Maxwell Selectman, and the Baldwins failed in their efforts to force Jacob Sharp upon the voters.

There was a proposition to increase the pay of the police from two dollars to two dollars and a half per night. There was much opposition to the increase, its general drift being that the policemen were already well paid, when Uncle Jerry was again recognized by the Moderator. Congressman Baldwin frowned, and a reflection of his frown was seen upon the face of the Moderator, who was obliged to recognize the mirth-provoking Barnaby.

He immediately began a somewhat rambling oration, which he had been declaiming in his own house for weeks, and which was intended to set forth the faithful services of the policemen. The audience was soon convulsed with laughter, and it was impossible for the Mod-

Digitized by Google

erator to check him, as almost everybody in the hall was encouraging him by laughter and applause.

Uncle Jerry was thoroughly in earnest. He could see no occasion for mirth.

"When all sounds of industry are stilled," said Uncle Jerry, "when the fond mother lies asleep with the darling babe on her bosom,—"

"Speak on the question, Mr. Barnaby!" roared the Moderator.

"I am speaking on the question, Mr. Moderator—when the demon tongues of fire leap up in the basement, and threaten your lovely home, threaten to envelop in their horrible embrace all that you hold dearest on earth,—that fond wife and loving mother and that darling infant on the mother's breast,—"

"Come to the point, Mr. Barnaby!"

"I am coming to the point, Mr. Moderator, just as fast as I can, but you make me lose my place. When the devouring flames, Mr. Moderator, threaten to embrace that fond wife and loving mother and darling infant on the mother's

Digitized by Google

breast,—it is the watchful eye of the vigilant policeman, Mr. Moderator—,"

The allusion to the "vigilant policemen" of Papyrus was the last straw. The audience reveled in such a fit of uncontrolled laughter that Uncle Jerry never proceeded further. Meanwhile the friends of the policemen thought it a favorable time to take a vote.

"Question!" shouted one.

"Question!" echoed a hundred. The policemen won.

The most important question taken up was that of a sewer. Physicians and others testified to the wretched sanitary conditions which made Papyrus one of the most unhealthy towns in the state, for the lack of a sewer. Deacon Surface, the most adroit speaker in Papyrus, answered them. He said that the taxes were too high. At the proper time the "men who owned the town" would be ready for a sewer, but not yet. He omitted to say that the Baldwins paid taxes on less than half the true value of their property in Papyrus. He

Digitized by Google

omitted to say, also, that the Baldwins had recently given to the city of Elmfield, for something much less needed than a sewer, a larger sum than it would cost to build several sewer-systems for Papyrus. The Deacon's speech was eloquent, polished, and well-rounded—a beautiful bubble, needing only the pin-point of truth to explode it. Ford Hulbert was just thinking it his duty to apply the pin to the bubble, when the irrepressible Barnaby rose.

"Mr. Moderator," piped the wild-eyed little man.

"Mr. Barnaby," groaned the Moderator.

"Mr. Moderator. I want to congratulate Deacon Surface on making the most eloquent speech I have ever heard in this hall. Among all the facts which he gave us, it is strange that he overlooked one fact—one cold, scientific truth—bearing on the question."

"What is it?" asked a hundred voices. Even Deacon Surface arose, turned toward Uncle Jerry, and joined in the ques-

Digitized by Google

tion. Then, when you could have heard a pin drop, and the silence was becoming oppressive, the piping voice said:—

"One cold, scientific fact, Mr. Moderator, just as true as the facts he gave us,—the moon is made of green cheese, Mr. Moderator."

Deacon Surface collapsed with his bubble argument, while the audience went wild. But the sewer was lost. The employees of Zechariah and David Baldwin, in a matter involving so large an outlay, dared not openly vote against their masters.

Not until we have the secret ballot for measures, as well as for men, will there be political freedom in Massachusetts towns.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

JOHN WYCLIFF'S den had become well known as a resort for workingmen, and people in other walks of life were occasionally to be found in consultation with him. Ford Hulbert, a real estate and insurance agent, was an occasional caller.

"You knew Wells Boardman, who was recently killed in an accident on the Papyrus Electric Street Railway?" asked Hulbert.

"Yes, very well; an old neighbor when we lived out in the country. His daughter, Lena, was one of the best girls I ever met. Her laugh would do one more good than medicine sometimes. A half hour with her was a sure cure for the blues."

"I don't need to tell you much about her, then."

"No, you do not. I have known her from the cradle up. A better girl or woman was never raised on the hills.

Digitized by Google

She was a rollicking, laughing, singing sunbeam, and never a thought of wrong in it all. Many a heart has been tangled in those brown curls of hers, though. It seems strange to me now, as I look back, that I was not one of the victims; but, then, we were too much like a sister and brother for that."

There was a pause, broken by Mr. Hulbert.

"She made an early and unfortunate marriage, I believe?"

"Yes; she left the hills, and came down into this dull valley. She brought the sparkle of the mountain brook, and the melody of the bobolinks with her. Wherever she went there was a ripple of laughter, a burst of sunshine, a peal of music. Such a girl could not be without admirers. She had plenty of them. And then,—what did she do? Deliberately picked out the worst one in the whole lot,—a drunken libertine, a man with whom scarcely any other respectable woman would be seen crossing the street."

Digitized by Google

"Why did she do it?"

"I cannot tell. Some thought it was because he had more money than her other admirers, but that may have been unjust to her. Whatever the reason, she had plenty of reason to regret her decision when it was too late."

"And then?" queried Hulbert, as Wycliff remained silent for several minutes, and showed no disposition to resume the conversation.

"Just what might have been expected. The scoundrel cared nothing for her and was soon running after other women, just as though he had no wife, to whom he had vowed fidelity. They had children,—two of them, and she remained several years for her children's sake. But it became more than flesh and blood could endure. He was continually abusing her, in the hope that she would leave him. When I was a boy I heard of a man who turned his son out of doors, and then whipped him for leaving home. Lena's husband was just about as consistent as that. He treated her so con-

Digitized by Google

temptibly, that if she had not left him, she must have gone crazy. Then he said that his wife 'could not have had much love for the children, else she would not have left them;'—the lying wretch. I have lived in places where he would have had a coat of tar and feathers."

"And then?" pursued Mr. Hulbert, who seemed anxious to have Wycliff continue.

"Well, not exactly what the villain had been planning for. He expected to secure a divorce for desertion, and to marry another woman who had attracted his wandering affections, but his wife secured the divorce, and the care of the children."

"And now," said Hulbert, in a low tone of voice, "an honest man who actually loves her, will find it very difficult to convince her of his loyalty to her."

Wycliff glanced up quickly.

"You are an admirer of Lena?"

"Yes, but we had a break. We had a falling-out the evening you left Beauna

Digitized by Google

Vista. We were watering our horses, sheltered from your sight by the hemlock bushes. I made a remark about Mr. Sharp, in connection with the church, which offended her."

"Yes, she is very loyal to the church; but the church has hardly kept its pledges to her in her trouble. I did not know that there were any disinterested witnesses of my difference with Sharp, else I might have proceeded differently."

"But now I must do my errand," resumed Hulbert. "I came to see you because Miss Boardman could not come, and she wishes your advice. Zechariah Baldwin, for the Papyrus Electric Street Railway Company, has offered her three thousand dollars in settlement for her father's death."

"The company acknowledges its liability, then?"

"Yes; the only question is as to the amount which shall be paid."

"Isn't Congressman Baldwin a stockholder in the company?"

"Yes; he is the heaviest stockholder."

Digitized by Google

"Of course, you know that the State of Massachusetts, some years ago, obeying the demands of the railroad corporations, which were killing a great many people, made a law that not more than five thousand dollars could be collected for a human life, lost through the fault of a railroad corporation. It's an infamous law, but it's there, all the same."

"Miss Boardman wants your advice as to whether she shall accept the three thousand dollars."

"Has she called upon Congressman Baldwin?"

"No, and she will not do so. She has too much independence for that. She will not go to him."

"Tell Lena not to be in a hurry, to wait a few days, and I will see if I can do anything for her."

"All right; if you can help her any she will do the fair thing by you. She ought to receive much more than they offer her. Good night."

Wycliff sat alone some time after his visitor had gone, looking into the fire,

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

and thinking of many things. One of his long-cherished idols had been gradually dethroned. He had been, before coming to Papyrus, a great admirer of Congressman Baldwin. It was hard for him to give up his political idol, but he had seen the workingmen of Papyrus defrauded of their votes, and Congressman Baldwin a silent and satisfied witness of the robbery. One word from Congressman Baldwin, who was the political boss of the State, would have blotted from the statute books of Massachusetts the damnable "Five-Thousand-Dollar Law;" but Congressman Baldwin never spoke the word. Instead, his puppets at Boston voted to retain the law, which shielded railroad and street railway corporations from just punishment for deaths caused by them, and robbed families of their victims. Wycliff himself, by David Baldwin's orders, had been blacklisted in all the Baldwin industries. The spotless Deacon Surface had notified every concern controlled by the Baldwins not to give em-

Digitized by Google

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

ployment to John Wycliff. This was more than his idolatry would bear. A man will forgive many things, but ought he to forgive the man who tries to take the bread away from his family?

John Wycliff looked up at the face of Congressman Baldwin, on the wall opposite. He arose and took down the portrait

"What on earth are you doing, John?" asked his wife, summoned from another room by the noise of breaking glass and splintering wood.

Bare feet came pattering down the stairs from the chamber above.

"Say, pop; what's up?"

"Robbie, what did the Israelites do every time they got a chance? What did the Lord have to punish them for, very often?"

"Worshipping idols."

"And once in a while, after being punished enough, what would they do?"

"Burn up their idols."

"That's right. That's what I've been doing. Now I'll kiss you both if you'll

Digitized by Google

clear out, and leave me alone, to write."

He then wrote a letter to an old friend and schoolmate, now an editor in Charleston, South Carolina. From that letter the following is extract taken:—

> "You have frequently requested me to write something for your paper, a request which I have been very slow to comply with. I do not suppose you wish me to write your editorials, and the enclosed article is only intended as a hint of the way in which I would use the facts referred to."

Within a week the whole country echoed with the first public attack ever made upon Congressman Baldwin. The attack was made by a Charleston, South Carolina, newspaper, and every political paper in the country was immediately drawn into the combat, either as an assailant or defender of the Congressman. Congressman Baldwin in a public speech, had commented bitterly upon the cheapness of human life in the South; and now every Southern newspaper, and many of their Northern sympathizers, were revenged upon him. The following

Digitized by Google

paragraphs from the Charleston paper formed the key-note of their attack:—

> "We have listened, and so has the rest of the country, while this immaculate and infallible Baldwin upbraided us for the cheapness of a human life in the South. What is the value of human life in Congressman Baldwin's own model town of Papyrus, in the model state of Massachusetts? Congressman Baldwin's trolley company takes the life of a man earning fifteen hundred dollars a year, and in full payment for that life, it offers the victim's family three thousand dollars. The Savings Banks offer the safest investment for widows and orphans. Should they accept, they would receive from the savings bank, at three and a half per cent.,—one hundred and five dollars a year.
>
> "To sum up the case: Congressman Baldwin's railway takes a life worth fifteen hundred dollars a year to the victim's family, and offers that family one hundred and five dollars a year in full settlement. And yet Congressman Baldwin says that human life is cheap,—in the South. Under Massachusetts law a railway company cannot be obliged to pay more than five thousand dollars for

Digitized by Google

taking a human life, while under a just law, like that of New York, a railroad corporation has been compelled to pay one hundred thousand dollars for a human life, lost through its negligence. A jury awarded that sum against the New York Central for a victim of the Park Avenue tunnel disaster of 1902.

"Congressman Baldwin is the political boss of his state, and responsible for that law which says to all the world that Massachusetts has no man whose life is worth more than five thousand dollars. Yet South Carolina once had slaves whose masters would not part with them for that sum. The explanation is simple. Baldwin has millions in railroads.

"One more item and we are done. Baldwin and other Massachusetts statesmen declaim loudly against negro disfranchisement in the South: 'Consistency is a jewel.' Baldwin's own mill-hands cannot vote on town-appropriations. Under the Massachusetts law they must stay in the mills and add to the Baldwin millions, while he 'runs the town.' Southerners say the black man is not fit to run the State. Baldwin of Massachusetts says his white mill-hands are not fit to run the Town. And he has Massachusetts law with him. 'People

Digitized by Google

who live in glass houses should not throw stones.' "

For weeks David Baldwin was the recipient of more unfriendly criticism than any other public man in Washington. The humble cause of all this trouble rolled his one gray eye, saying :—

"Blacklist me again for telling the truth, will you? Shut your eyes again, while your workmen's votes are stolen, Dave Baldwin !"

Long before the battle was over the Congressman became very weary of it, and sent the following directions to his brother, Zechariah :—

"Pay Wells Boardman's daughter twenty thousand dollars. Charge five thousand dollars to Papyrus Electric Railway, and balance to me."

The news of this generous payment was spread throughout the country, and took the edge off the criticism of Baldwin.

"Is that you, Lena?" asked Mrs. Wycliff, one evening.

"I think it is," was the answer.

Digitized by Google

"Here's a check for a thousand dollars, for your husband. Tell him he has earned it. I have said all along that John could make the Baldwins toe the mark. He is almost the only one about here who is not afraid of them, and he is the only one who hits them in the only place where they feel it,—in the newspapers. They don't care anything about right and wrong, God, man or the devil, but they don't like to have their injustice shown up in the newspapers, or in the courts. They don't fear God, or His Word, or the Judgment Day, but they are afraid of newspapers and courts. I don't care for the twenty thousand dollars myself, but with the income from it I can give my boys a good education. Tell John I hear that Zack Baldwin will give a thousand dollars to get him out of town. This thousand is for him to stay."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

A FREQUENT caller at the Wycliff home was "Uncle Jerry" Barnaby. He was always welcome, being an old friend, the acquaintance between the two families dating back to the time when both occupied farms in Sprucemont—the little hill-town, richer in broad views and fresh air than in salable commodities.

"Oh, I was a king, then!" said Uncle Jerry. "Only think of those beautiful fields of grass and grain that I used to have."

"And how much labor you spent in getting out the rocks and improving the land, before you could have those crops," replied Mrs. Wycliff.

"Yes, I was the first farmer in all that region to use dynamite, both on my farm and on the highways. Oh, I was a king then; king of my own farm, anyway. And now I am a slave to these sleek villains, the Baldwins. The tears

Digitized by Google

come to my eyes whenever I think of those old times; and of those sleek cattle that had been petted so much by my wife and the girls that it seemed like sacrilege to sell them; they seemed to belong to the family." And Uncle Jerry burst into tears at his own recital of former glories.

"To think that I should have come to this," exclaimed Uncle Jerry. "To be a slave,—a poor, despised, down-trodden slave for the Baldwins,—and I used to be a king of two hundred acres in Sprucemont.

"And those colts, the beautiful creatures. When I went into the pasture they would come up to me and lay their noses on my cheeks, and almost talk to me. How many colts I have raised to be fine horses, and sold for good prices, and my wife and daughters could always ride anywhere they chose, and to-day—" and Uncle Jerry could not proceed for some minutes for sobbing.

"To-day," he continued, at length, "My poor dear girl is pining away for

Digitized by Google

the fresh air. I heard yesterday that Zack Baldwin had an old horse that he was going to kill. I might have known that I would be refused, but I was thinking only of my poor dear girl, and I went and begged him to let me have the old horse. I promised him it should never do anything but draw the poor girl the little way she is able to ride."

"Didn't he let you have it?" asked Mrs. Wycliff, full of sympathy.

"Of course not. It wouldn't make any big sound, you know, like giving a half a million dollars to a library. It might, possibly, have saved my daughter's life. He ordered the horse taken out and shot before my eyes. I felt as if those shots sounded my daughter's doom. I might have known that a man who would discharge me for getting the policemen's pay raised, would refuse me an old horse which might save my daughter's life."

"Did he discharge you for that?"

"Surely. He came to me after town-meeting, and said:—'A man who works

Digitized by Google

against my interests in town-meeting will never get another day's work from me. I have no use for such men as you and Wycliff. He got offended at me once before. It was a year ago. Fifty of us were making a lawn for him. He paid us only a dollar and a half a day, although everybody else about here was paying a dollar and three-quarters for that kind of work. I circulated a petition, which most of the workmen signed, asking for one dollar and seventy-five cents per day, and presented the petition to Zack Baldwin. He finally agreed to split the difference with us, and pay us a dollar and sixty-two and a half cents a day, but he was revenged on us. Those who refused to sign the petition were given work much longer than the rest. That is the Baldwin brand of Christianity, —paying lower wages than other employers pay, and discharging those who ask for fair wages; and at the same time making princely gifts to public libraries and other institutions. It was because outside work was dull, just then, that

Digitized by Google

Zack Baldwin took advantage of us, to get our work at less than market price."

"But I thought," said Mrs. Wycliff, "that Zechariah and David Baldwin were in company."

"They are,—in the mills. Congressman Baldwin isn't a bit better than Old Zack, the old Shylock. The man who shuts his eyes to tyranny isn't a bit better than the tyrant. Since town-meeting I've had to walk three miles up to the Wendell Farm, for work. These little hands were not made for handling heavy stone." And he exhibited a pair of hands almost as small and fine as a lady's.

"You look like a light and feeble man to walk six miles and handle stone all day, and you must be getting a little too old for hard work. How old are you, Uncle Jerry?"

"I can't tell. I've even written back to the old country,—I was born in Ireland,—and tried to find out, but I think the records must have been destroyed. I could not get any information about it.

Digitized by Google

I can remember once shaking hands with Abraham Lincoln, in the city of Hartford. That is a landmark in my life. I was grown up then and able to do a man's work."

John Wycliff arose, took down a volume from his bookcase, and examined it a moment.

"Lincoln was in Hartford on the fifth day of March, 1860, and, I think, never at any other time. Very likely you are about sixty-five years old now."

"What is the matter with your daughter?" asked Mrs. Wycliff.

"I cannot tell you, because the doctors cannot tell me. It seems to be a sort of melancholy."

"What caused it?"

"Well, there's a point I don't like to speak of."

"Don't mention it, then. Please forgive me for asking."

"After all, it doesn't matter, seeing there are no strangers here;" and Uncle Jerry lowered his voice and looked inquiringly toward the doors.

Digitized by Google

"There is no one except ourselves within hearing," said Mrs. Wycliff, reassuringly.

"It was years ago, but after you left the hills," continued Uncle Jerry, in a low voice. "Pet,—that's what we called her,—was gay as a bird till then. Pet got acquainted with a fine young man up in the country,—a fine fellow he was every way. I'd say that if 'twas the last thing I was to say in this world. Never a likelier fellow ever grew up on the hills, if I do say it. Well, he took a liking to our Pet, and I guess there was as much love on Pet's part as on his."

Uncle Jerry paused. After a little Mrs. Wycliff ventured to ask:

"Why didn't they marry?"

"Well, you see,—" and Uncle Jerry's voice dropped lower still. "I said he was as fine a fellow as ever grew up on the hills, and I wouldn't take it back if it was to be the last thing I ever said, but —he was a Protestant." Uncle Jerry was silent a few moments.

"Looking back now, it seems to me

Digitized by Google

that we were both, Pet's mother and I, willing to ruin Pet for life rather than have her marry a Protestant. While I cannot say positively that this is the reason for Pet's long sickness, yet of one thing I am certain—she has not been like her former self since that time."

"But what became of him?"

"He went away, to the West it was believed. No one on the hills, so far as I know, has heard from him since. But this whole subject is one which I do not like to think about, much less talk about. I have learned one lesson, and a pretty costly one,—when God has taught two persons to love one another no one should be guilty of keeping them apart."

"And here am I," continued Uncle Jerry piteously, "Sixty-five years old, at least, discharged by those sleek villains, the Baldwins, because I dared to champion the policemen, and obliged to walk six miles a day to work, and then,—only think of it,—this slender body and these weak hands to build stone wall all day. The only work I can get to do with these

Digitized by Google

little hands is to lift and tug at heavy stone all day. Merciful God! What shall I do? I can't stand this work a great while. My back is almost broken. These thin arms are as sore as boils. These little hands are covered with blisters. And my poor, dear girl pining for the fresh air. That horse that Zack Baldwin ordered shot to-day, might have saved my daughter's life. What does he care? He will kill me, in time, too, for I can't walk six miles and build stone wall all day, and follow it up a great while." And Uncle Jerry paced the floor in agony, his face drawn and white, and wringing his small, thin hands.

"You have a fine house, Uncle Jerry," said Mrs. Wycliff.

"Yes; but we can't eat or drink it, or if we could, how long would it last? If I began to use up the value of my home how long would it be before I should be 'on the town?' "

"But I mean could you not rent furnished rooms?"

"No; Pet is so nervous I can hardly

Digitized by Google

live with her myself, much less have strangers in the same house with her. We try to economize, but economy is difficult to practice with sickness. There is only one thing I can do. I must sell my place, and buy a little farm back in the country again. I was born under king-rule. I am not going to die under it."

"But you are not able to do the work on a farm," protested Mrs. Wycliff, "or even if you are able to do it to-day you will not be able to do it long. Your wife and daughters used to help you a great deal on the farm. They are not able to do it now. I think I know of a better arrangement."

"What is it?" asked Uncle Jerry, much as a drowning man might grasp at a straw.

"You have a good house, which would bring you in a large rent. Then you could get a job at superintending a small farm. You would not need to work, yourself, any more than you felt able to."

Digitized by Google

"Who would give old Jerry Barnaby a job as a farm boss, especially when he could not get a recommend from the Baldwins? Don't try to fool a poor old man. It's cruel, and besides it isn't like you, either, John Wycliff." And Uncle Jerry looked reproachfully at the younger man.

"It's no fooling, Uncle Jerry," said Wycliff rising, and placing his hands on Barnaby's shoulders. "Do you know the Twin Mountain Farm?"

"Every rod of it."

"Now, if you are not too steep with your price, you can take charge of that farm. You will have your fuel, vegetables, meat, maple sugar—indeed, most of your living off the farm. You will not need a very big cash salary, along with your rent, to take care of you and your family in good shape, and your wife and daughter will have a horse to drive whenever they wish."

"Who owns the place?" asked Barnaby.

"A one-eyed crank named Wycliff."

Digitized by Google

"Do you own that place? Well, we shan't have any trouble about the price, if you think I can fill the bill."

"Yes, yes, Uncle Jerry. Come around in the morning and we will make a bargain in five minutes. Then we will drive off and buy stock and tools."

"Very well. I must get home and tell Pet and her mother. We are willing to shake the dust of Papyrus off our feet any day."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

EVA BALDWIN was the most independent, the most democratic, and the most religious member of the Baldwin family. I use the word religious in its most practical sense. The Baldwins were all religious; they were all church-members; they all had the outside, the husk, the wrapper, of religion. With them, a costly house of worship, a silver-tongued preacher, the repetition of some high-sounding passages from God's Word and the payment of a certain amount of money for church expenses—these things constituted religion.

The Baldwins, when it came to religion, were like a certain boy, who went chestnutting. He had never seen a chestnut, and he eagerly filled his basket with the great prickly burs, which the frost had opened, but never noticed the nuts themselves, which lay hidden under the leaves.

The Baldwins were very religious,—

Digitized by Google

but if the Christ had come into Papyrus, the town which belonged to them, they would have given Him twenty-four hours notice to get out. He was a disturber in the vales of Judea, and He would have been too radical for the Lords of the Berkshire Hills. It would have become the painful duty of the round and sleek Deacon Surface, and the g a u n t and spectral Sheriff Burse, on notice from the Baldwins, to order Him out.

But E v a—black-eyed E v a—differed from her kindred. She was not satisfied with the husk of Christianity. She was a constant t h o r n in the side of her brother, Zechariah, and in a less degree of her brother, David, the Congressman. Even between these two there was a great gulf. The Congressman believed in equal rights, except at home, and for his own workmen. None of the devices, some of them of almost Satanic ingenuity, by which the mill-hands of Papyrus were prevented from enjoying their just share in town-government, none of these devices, I say, could have suc-

Digitized by Google

ceeded, without Congressman Baldwin's approval, through his confidential agent, the hundred-faced, oily-tongued Deacon Surface. None of these devices for stealing the workman's vote won Eva Baldwin's approval.

In looking—and she had not far to look—for worthy objects upon which to bestow her help, in a practical and sensible way, Eva Baldwin had long since found in Sprucemont, that little "deserted town" on the mountain-tops, an outlet for some of her benevolent impulses and surplus funds. A few generations ago Sprucemont had been one of the most prosperous towns on the hills, but influences which it would take too long to describe here had brought her very low, both in population and wealth. The church in Sprucemont had long since ceased to be self-supporting, and was dependent upon the generosity of Eva Baldwin and others of her kind.

To awaken the interest of natives of the town who had removed, to stir the pride of those remaining, and to attract

Digitized by Google

buyers for the abandoned farms, a celebration was planned in honor of the town's settlement. For such an occasion it was only natural that the most distinguished native of the town, Reverened Ralph Cutter, filling a pulpit in Springdale, should be selected as the principal speaker.

The day came. Up the long hills toward Sprucemont Center climbed teams and vehicles of various descriptions. The newest automobile, the stylish and luxurious up-to-date carriage with liveried driver and sleek, well-groomed pair, and the pleasure-seeker's four-horse tally-ho, these shared the mountain road with ancient specimens of the carriage-makers' art, broken and repaired with conspicuous lack of skill, and drawn by animals to whom the currycomb and oat-bin seemed alike strangers. Between these extremes were the comfortable and tidy conveyances of the middle classes.

It was a perfect June day. The rock maples, the red beeches and the various birches were in their full summer luxu-

Digitized by Google

riance, and their light green foliage contrasted prettily with the darker, more somber shades of the spruce, the hemlock, and the balsam fir. The verdure of mowlands and pastures was sprinkled with the commonplace buttercups and daisies, while the roadside thickets were eloquent to the eye with the pink and white blossoms of the mountain laurel.

The forests echoed with the silver bell of the wood thrush, while the rollicking, bubbling melody of the bobolink, and the clear, sweet whistle of the meadow lark filled every wayside field.

The ancient meeting-house, where the services were held, was a fine specimen of old style, country church architecture. It had been built, nearly a century before, to accommodate eight hundred people, but the population of the town, had dwindled to half that number.

"The strength of the hills is His also."

It was with these words of the Psalmist that Reverned Ralph Cutter began his review of the town's history. No one seemed to realize that he spoke an

Digitized by Google

hour. A library has been written about the best way to hold the attention of an audience. It might all be boiled down to this:—"Have something to say worth saying, and then say it in a way worth hearing. Ralph Cutter knew his subject thoroughly. He could only give an outline of it in the time allotted to him; but, as little ten-year-old Jimmy Stetson said, "When Mr. Cutter tells an Indian story you feel as though the Red Skins were skulking around the church, and when he talks about bears you almost expect to hear 'em growl."

"Aunt Lyddy" Buxton, who came early and had a seat near the pulpit, said:—"That's the first time I have heard a minister in a year, although I go to church every Sunday. Thank God there's now and then a minister who thinks it a part of his duty to make people hear."

"That's the minister I always like to hear," said Farmer Gray. "I don't have to go to a dictionary to find out what he means, and it's all good, sober,

Digitized by Google

solid sense, every word he has to say."

The speaker did not occupy a minute more than the time allotted to him. For a minister, or any other speaker, to take time which belonged to others, Ralph Cutter considered no better than any other kind of stealing, and he never practiced it. He always kept within his allotted time. He had saved a few minutes in which to consider the future of the town.

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and every hill shall be made low."

"I understand these words of Isaiah," he said, "to be prophecy full of blessing to us all. These hills shall be brought low—that is to say, they shall be more easily reached. Not only this, but the working people in the cities shall be able to reach them. The time is coming, when the poorest one of our millions of laborers shall be able to enjoy a summer vacation, with his family, on these hills, or at the sea-shore, or wherever else on God's beautiful earth he chooses to spend

Digitized by Google

it. The multitudes, now scarcely earning their daily bread, shall not always toil to maintain the few in idleness and luxury. The good things, the best things of God's bountiful earth shall be within reach of the toiling masses, not occasionally and sparingly, but at all times and in generous measure. The workman shall enjoy the full fruit of his labors. There shall be no idlers, as now, to fatten upon the laborers' toil. God has provided an abundance for all His children, and the avarice of the few shall not always keep his gifts away from the many.

"Perhaps you will call this socialism, but it is Christianity also. I believe, in practice, we have scarcely learned the a b c of Christianity. I am not attacking the rights of property. I have no pet theories to advance. The present system, which allows one man to pile up hundreds of millions by getting control of steel or oil, while the working multitude are little better than slaves—this system, I say, cannot endure. It must fall. When we have learned, by expe-

Digitized by Google

rience, what true Christianity means, it may be that we shall get back very near to the starting-point of Christianity, when the disciples had all things common.

"Every mountain and hill shall be brought low—brought within reach of the toiling hosts of the valley. All these abandoned acres shall be tilled again. This temple shall again be filled with glad worshippers, as of old. The electric railway, which is leveling the hills everywhere, shall bring to these beautiful heights the tired and dusty dwellers in the city, for summer rest. This leveling process shall benefit the dwellers and toilers in the vales. Already the farmhouse feels the throbbing life of the city, through the telephone and the daily mail. This is only the beginning. No one knows what the end may be."

It was an eloquent address; eloquent in its pictures of history; eloquent in its present comfort; eloquent in its promise for the future, and it had a fitting and appreciative word for those outside the

Digitized by Google

town who had kept the fires of religion burning on this ancient altar. It had none of the marks of much of our present oratory—no foreign phrases; no words difficult to understand; no carefully poised periods; no words dropped nearly to a whisper. The prize pupil in elocution sometimes cannot be heard in the rear of the hall, while the speaker who makes himself clearly heard in all parts of the house goes home without even honorable mention. While mere noise is not oratory, yet Daniel Webster, Charles Sumner and George William Curtis always made themselves heard. The speaker's concluding words were:—

"Let us be true to the God of our fathers, and the God of our fathers shall bless us."

There was not a more interested listener than Eva Baldwin. All the old feeling which she had experienced during the speaker's stay in Papyrus, and which she had tried to suppress since, came rushing back. She thought: "Why could not God have given to me

Digitized by Google

to be the help-meet of such a man, even if He gave my millions to some one else?"

As for Ralph Cutter, he had been unjust to Miss Baldwin in allowing her wealth to place a barrier between them. The sight of her to-day fanned into flame again the old fires of his admiration, and he more than half resolved to seek an opportunity of renewing her acquaintance.

After the exercises, which closed early, several small parties visited Twin Mountain, which was near by. One of the parties included Reverend Ralph Cutter and another included the Baldwins. For a moment, and only for a moment, the parties met. The minister and the heiress saluted each other cordially and lingered after their parties had separated. She expressed regret that he had left Papyrus. He expressed regret that it had seemed best for him to leave, and then, something in her eyes seeming to warrant it, he added:

"I had hoped to become better ac-

Digitized by Google

quainted with you, had I remained."

"Did I place any obstacles in the way of our further acquaintance? I certainly did not intend to do so," she replied, and there was no mistaking the frank, honest meaning in the black eyes.

"No, you did not. May I correspond with you?"

"Certainly." She was laughing now; a laugh of relief and pleasure. "But do not forget, when circumstances permit, that a face to face meeting is a long way ahead of a letter."

But the parties to which they belonged were getting farther and farther apart.

"You might return home with us," she suggested. "You could take an evening train for Springdale." And he very gladly assented.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

IT would be unjust in this narrative to class David Baldwin, the Congressman, with his brother, Zechariah. David meant to be just. Whatever of justice there was in the relations of the Baldwins to their workmen was usually credited by the workmen to Congressman Baldwin, and probably they were right. Such reforms as had been granted in the mills had usually been secured by appealing from Zechariah, the resident manager, to David, whose public duties kept him much of the time in Washington. David Baldwin was generous. If there was anything of the "milk of human kindness" in the treatment of the Baldwin workmen it was due largely to David.

Zechariah Baldwin was generous when he thought his generosity would make a big display, and be heralded in the public press. In the church and in the press, especially the religious press, the

Digitized by Google

name of Zechariah Baldwin was acclaimed loudly as a philanthropist. In private circles, particularly among his own workmen, in those small circles where the laborer dared to speak his honest feelings, he was oftener spoken of as a "skinflint," or simply a "skin," a term in common use which is full of meaning, and that not of the best kind. Zechariah Baldwin was the last to raise the wages of his help and the first to cut them down.

David Baldwin was rarely known, where the decision lay with himself alone, to refuse any reasonable request of a workingman. While his public gifts were not as large, nor trumpeted as loudly as his brother's, still, the unfortunate employee or neighbor who needed help, knew where to get it. But David was absent much of the time, either in Washington, performing his official duties as Congressman, or attending to large financial interests outside of Papyrus. Hence it happened that Zechariah Baldwin was usually the boss of

Digitized by Google

Papyrus and political independence was not tolerated among the workmen. Few workingmen had ever remained long in Papyrus after showing in any way their independence of the Baldwins.

Zechariah Baldwin defended the position of the paper manufacturers in this way:

"We have built up the town; we own it and we claim the moral right to drive out of it any man who is offensive to us. That one-eyed Wycliff is a mischief-maker and trouble-breeder and he has got to get out.

But Wycliff did not get out. He did not even promise to get out. He seemed to have no intention of getting out. The methods which usually succeeded in driving a workingman out of town—blacklisting him in all the Baldwin industries and warning other employers not to hire him—these methods had failed utterly in the case of John Wycliff.

"We cannot tolerate him much longer," said Zack Baldwin. Certainly not. Where one workingman

Digitized by Google

dares to do his own thinking and to express his own opinions there is danger that others will catch the distemper. What if they should form a union and demand the same wages paid elsewhere for the same work? Such a thing was not to be thought of for an instant.

"We must fight the devil with fire," said Zack Baldwin. Accordingly he offered a few Papyrus roughs a large sum if they would drive Wycliff out of town. He was not particular as to the means employed, so long as they avoided publicity and arrest. Zack Baldwin's own son, Jehu, might be classed with other Papyrus roughs, in spite of a thin veneer of polished manners, which high society and the schools had given him. It is highly probable that the means employed to rid the town of Wycliff might have been violent but for an unexpected incident.

Zechariah Baldwin met an old acquaintance from the West at the Taconic House, the only hotel in Papyrus, and, of course, the property of the Baldwins.

Digitized by Google

"How do you do, Colonel Lathrop?" exclaimed the Lord of Papyrus, effusively.

"That you, Baldwin?" replied the Westerner; "you have a delightful town here."

"So we think;" and the little millionaire paper-maker rubbed his hands in self-congratulation; "but we have a few evil-minded cranks among us who think they could improve matters. However, I think the boys will drive out the worst one within a week."

"Who is he? Who would think of finding fault with such a paradise as this?" pursued the Colonel.

"No one but a fool—a crank named Wycliff. There he is now, cleaning the street, with the rest of Maxwell's gang —a job just suited to him, except that he ought not to have any employment at all in a decent town."

"Wycliff? Wycliff? John Wycliff?—One-eyed Wycliff?"

"Yes, that's the man. Do you know him?" asked the little man in surprise.

Digitized by Google

"I rather think I do," replied Colonel Lathrop, pulling out his wallet, "and here's a hundred dollars that says you don't drive John Wycliff out of Papyrus, and that if you try it you'll have the biggest job for the Coroner you ever had in Berkshire. What! Won't put up the money?" and the big ranchman looked down on the little millionaire with contempt.

"There's no blood in your neck, is there!"

The dapper little churchman was shocked that anyone should expect him to do such a vulgar, unchristian thing as to bet, but he controlled himself long enough to ask:—

"What do you know of Wycliff?"

"Oh, not much," sneered the big fellow, "except that he is the most stubborn cuss, and can shoot the straightest and quickest of any man I ever knew." Then, as the little man waited, he continued:—

"He was a cow-boy on my ranch. One day the Indians tried to stampede his

Digitized by Google

herd. There were seven red devils, and he all alone against them. We found four 'good Indians,' Indians that would never steal any more cattle, one just dying, and two had returned to the reservation to report that Wycliff was 'bad medicine.' We found Wycliff, nearly dead, with one eye shot out, behind a breastwork of dead cattle."

The big ranchman did not attempt to disguise his contempt for the little man, and without a word of farewell, he strode down into the dirt of the street, to greet his former employee. Meanwhile one of the loungers at the hotel had overheard the Colonel's story. Before night it was repeated, with numerous additions, all through Papyrus, and all the Baldwins' money would not have hired the biggest bully in the town to approach John Wycliff with evil intent.

The ranchman stepped up to Hugh Maxwell, who was overseeing the work, saying:—

"I want to borrow one of your men—Wycliff—for awhile, if I may do so."

Digitized by Google

"All right," was the reply. "Only return him in good condition."

Then the two walked off down the street, and the Colonel told Wycliff of his conversation with Zechariah Baldwin.

"I'm not afraid of anything in that direction," replied Wycliff. "I am blessed with lots of good friends in Papyrus, and one of Zack Baldwin's own gang gave away the whole plot to me. I have friends in Zack Baldwin's own house. I have taken all the precautions I care to. I have sent away my wife and child, for the present, up into the country. Such of our household goods as are valuable merely for their associations—our pictures, my mounted cougar, everything which money could not replace—all these things I have taken to a neighbor's. As for me, I don't know as I should live a week if some one did not threaten to injure me." And Wycliff laughed.

"I came to town," said Colonel Lathrop, "to see about your share in the

Digitized by Google

Rattlesnake. I hope you haven't sold it."

"No. When I lost my property I tried to sell it, but could not get an offer. I have felt that sometime it might become of value, perhaps through cheaper methods of mining."

"You know Walker Nichols, the mining expert?"

"By reputation. Yes."

"He thinks that by the practice of new economies in mining, which will lessen our expenses considerably, we may be able to operate the Rattlesnake Mine at a small profit. Then there is always the possibility of striking a richer vein. Shall I go ahead? You will not need to advance anything."

"Certainly."

"You remember Mr. Baxter?"

"Yes; 'Old Sunshine,' the boys used to call him."

"He has great faith that we shall strike something better if we open up the Rattlesnake again. His opinion ought to be worth something. He was

Digitized by Google

a 'forty-niner,' has worked in the mines ever since, and has made and lost fortunes in them."

Colonel Lathrop withdrew, and John Wycliff returned to his work.

Zechariah Baldwin, although temporarily thwarted in his plans to rid the town of Wycliff, was by no means inclined to give up his efforts. He had an abundance of resources and expedients, and when one failed he was not usually long in finding another.

Wycliff's family had been sent up to Sprucemont, where they were the guests of their old friends, the Porters. One night, soon after their departure, Wycliff, who had retired, was awakened by a lusty rap at the door.

"Who's there?" he shouted, throwing up his chamber window.

"Not too loud, John," came the answer from a suppressed voice.

"That you, Dan? Wait a minute till I let you in."

"No; I can't stop. There's a big game on foot. Jehu Baldwin will fire a revolver

Digitized by Google

through his Uncle David's bedroom window. Then he will run in the middle of the street to your house, where he will take to the grass and throw the weapon upon your lawn."

"To-night?"

"Yes; just a f t e r midnight. But I must get back."

Congressman Baldwin was the idol of the masses, and if it could be made to appear that Wycliff had assaulted him there would be a riot, and the victim of its fury would be fortunate if he escaped alive. Frontier methods would not avail at this crisis. Wycliff was somewhat resourceful himself. He got his camera and prepared for a flashlight photograph. He had been writing a magazine article on the whippoorwill—(one of these birds sang in the lilacs every night)—and he had the materials ready for a flashlight of the bird, to illustrate his article. He would now use them to photograph a different object. He set his camera so that it would sweep the highway, and waited under cover of the midnight darkness.

Digitized by Google

The town clock struck for twelve. A thunder-shower was coming up. There was an occasional flash and roar from the cloud. The whippoorwill sang in the lilacs. There were pistol-shots down the road, and then the sound of running footsteps. They drew nearer until they were directly in front of Wycliff. The flashlight did its work. Wycliff boarded a trolley-car for Elmfield, carrying the precious camera, and leaving this notice on his front door:—

"Gone to visit my old friend,
Sheriff Coggswell, at the Jail.
JOHN WYCLIFF."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

ON that same evening mentioned in our last chapter there was a social gathering at Farmer Porter's, in Sprucemont. It was a festival known among the Green Mountain farmers as a "sugar-eat," but it was held very much out of season. Maple sugar is usually made during the months of February or March. The sap drawn from the rock-maple, or sugar-maple trees is boiled until it reaches a consistency which is called wax. Tin pans are pressed full of snow, and the maple wax, dipped boiling from the kettles, is poured upon the snow. The wax hardens upon the snow, and is then esteemed the greatest delicacy of country epicures.

For many years Farmer Porter had treated his neighbors to an annual sugar-eat; not in winter or spring, but in midsummer, the snow being obtained from the cave on Twin Mountain, known as the "Bear's Den." On this occasion,

Digitized by Google

besides his country neighbors, there were present some friends from Papyrus, Ford Hulbert and Lena Boardman, and John Wycliff's wife and child. Uncle Jerry Barnaby was a neighbor, and was present with his wife and daughter.

The farmers, and their wives, daughters, mothers and sweethearts for miles around, thronged the hospitable home of Daniel Porter. In the old-fashioned fireplace in the kitchen, on a stout iron crane, hung the ancient copper kettle filled with maple syrup. A crackling wood fire kept the syrup leaping and dancing, until it was boiled down thick enough to "stand," or harden, upon the snow. A number of experts decided this point, and when, according to their verdict, it was just brittle enough, the boys brought in the pans of snow which they had secured from the cave.

The guests were seated at long tables, each group of two or three having a pan of snow, on which the maple wax had been poured in fanciful figures, which were gathered off the snow and eaten

Digitized by Google

with forks. There was a moment's hush, as the preacher arose and invoked the Lord's blessing upon the occasion. Then began a season of social intercourse and merry-making.

An outburst of laughter from all occasionally testified to a fresh triumph of Uncle Jerry's wit and called attention anew to the pale young woman beside him. There was circulated among a few near friends a photograph of a young man, a Westerner apparently, and it was whispered about that he was a prosperous ranchman and lumberman, and that he would soon return to revisit the home of his youth. The picture, and the neighborly remarks called forth by it, brought a momentary color to the pale face by Uncle Jerry's side.

Old neighbors and friends were no less interested in Miss Boardman, whose girlhood had been spent among them, and who was here to-night, accompanied by Ford Hulbert, the Papyrus real estate agent. If Lena Boardman were at all observant, she must have noticed the re-

Digitized by Google

spect shown her companion by all present, and the slightest inquiry would have revealed the fact that he was universally respected in the little farming community.

It was a weird occasion, for the snows of winter and the sweets of spring contrasted strangely with the warmth of the midsummer evening, and it was soon over. The last sentiment expressed at the tables, as the party broke up, was this of Uncle Jerry: "Our Berkshire women,—God bless 'em,—the sweetest things of God's creation."

Lena Boardman and Ford Hulbert had come on horseback, a favorite method of travel with them, and as soon as the party began to break up they returned to Papyrus in the same way they had come. Down the long slopes the riders cantered, sometimes through deep woods, sometimes in the open. It was quite dark, but where the riders could not be sure of their way the horses could be trusted to find it.

An owl shouted his greeting from the

Digitized by Google

tall spire of a spruce tree. The hurried whistle of a whippoorwill rang out from a thicket of wild cherry bushes. Up from the deep aisles of a hemlock woods came the snarl of a wildcat.

The roadside bushes had a spicy breath. A minty fragrance was wafted from the brookside. From fields freshly cut came the scent of hay newly mown.

Hulbert r e i n e d up his horse, and stopped his companion's, also.

"Lena," he said, "havent I been on probation long enough? You have known for a long time that I love you. How long are you going to hold me off at arm's length?"

"A burnt child dreads the fire," replied his companion. "I said yes once, to my sorrow. I don't want to be hasty again."

"I don't like to be compared to Clif Borden," he replied. "If you made a bad choice once, I don't know who was to blame for it but yourself. You knew the man, or you ought to have known him; you knew, or you ought to have

Digitized by Google

known, for your friends told you, that Borden had no respect for any woman, and no respect for virtue. You went into the fire, as you express it, with full knowledge of the risk you were running. I have served a good long apprenticeship for your hand. You ought to know, also, whether I am an honorable man. It is a long time since I first asked you to be my wife. Don't be in a hurry about answering. I shall never ask you again." And Hulbert's horse resumed its canter down the mountain road,

There was just the least bit of the coquette about Lena Boardman. She had fully decided to accept Ford Hulbert, but she wanted to play him for awhile yet.

A thunder-shower was coming up rapidly in the south, and the blackness there was crossed by zig-zag chains of light.

The hoof-beats were out of harmony with the music of the mountain brook. Lena thought of the little spring near Phillips Porter's, where the brook started. The little stream seemed uncertain,

Digitized by Google

at first, which way to go. Soon it left the level meadow of its parent spring, and came to the steep hillside. It rippled and sparkled and tumbled alongside the mountain road for miles. Then another brook tumbled into it. Then the larger stream splashed noisily down the mountain till it joined the river. The river knew where to go. It took a strong dam to stop it and make it turn the mill-wheel.

Lena thought of the time when she had first met Hulbert. She remembered that spring of admiration for the big, handsome, courteous fellow, whom everybody respected, and who ought not to be dishonored by mention at the same time with the libertine whom she had married. She knew that he loved her, and she knew that her own love had grown, like the mountain brook, till it was too strong to be turned aside.

During the remainder of the ride Lena was considering how she might most easily surrender. They reached her own door, where Ford helped her to

Digitized by Google

alight. Just then a number of pistol-shots rang out at a little distance down the street, but he paid little attention to them, for her arms were reached out toward him. She spoke but one word,—"Ford,"—but it was enough.

A few minutes later, when Hulbert remounted his horse, a lightning-flash made the street below brighter than noonday, and showed to Hulbert and his companion Jehu Baldwin hurrying past, pistol in hand. Perhaps they would have thought more of this, had they not noticed by another flash, illuminating a verandah across the street, the parting of Eva Baldwin and Ralph Cutter.

Riding his own horse, and leading the one his companion had ridden, Hulbert hurried away to escape the shower. His home was a large farm, quite away from the village.

Next morning, upon taking up a daily paper, he was quite surprised at the headlines reproduced on the following page from the Elmfield *Star*:—

Digitized by Google

SHOTS FIRED AT DAVID BALDWIN

John Wycliff the Man Who Committed the Assault.

WYCLIFF'S DWELLING DESTROYED

By a Papyrus Mob--He Gives Himself Up to Sheriff Coggswell.

He did not stop to read further, but mounted his horse, and was soon at Congressman Baldwin's office.

"I guess we are rid of John Wycliff for awhile," remarked the Congressman.

"See here, Dave Baldwin, your nephew, Jehu, fired those shots, and I'll give you just ten minutes in which to call your dogs off from Wycliff. If you don't do it in that time I'll telegraph the truth about this affair to a New York paper which you cannot command."

Digitized by Google

"How do you know that Jehu did it?" asked the Congressman.

"Because I saw him coming from this direction, the pistol still in his hand, shortly after I heard the shots."

"Why have you waited until now before saying a word?"

"I did not suspect anything wrong until I saw this morning's paper. There is at least one crisis in a man's life when he is too full of satisfaction himself to suspect anyone of wrong-doing."

Just then the telephone bell rang.

"Is this David Baldwin?"

"Yes. Who is this?"

"This is Ralph Cutter at Springdale. I am sorry for you in your experience of last night. If you will excuse an old-fashioned country expression, you are barking up the wrong tree. You are entirely wrong in your charge against Wycliff. Your nephew, Jehu, is the real culprit. I heard the shots, and was just taking leave of your sister, when a flash of lightning showed Jehu distincly, in the middle of the street, and the weapon

Digitized by Google

still in his hand. Probably it was very dull of me, but I never thought anything was wrong. When a man has just found the geatest blessing of his life he may be forgiven for being dull to common things."

"It seems to me that Cupid was working overtime last night," remarked the Congressman to himself.

"I do not wish to make public what I know about Jehu Baldwin," continued the voice from Springdale, "because I think that some older person put up the job, and has used Jehu merely as a tool; but unless you shall promptly withdraw your charge against Wycliff, justice will compel me to make a public announcement."

"The charge will be withdrawn at once," replied the Congressman.

Baldwin then rang up the jail at Elmfield.

"Is this Sheriff Coggswell?"

"It is."

"This is David Baldwin. Is Wycliff under arrest?"

Digitized by Google

"He is not. He is my guest. I shall not arrest him unless the law compels me to do so, as I have full proof of his innocence, and of Jehu Baldwin's guilt. I have a witness who can't be bribed or brow-beaten, and whose testimony would stand against all the Baldwins that ever lived."

[Congressman Baldwin and Sheriff Coggswell were political enemies.]

"A pretty good witness that. Who is he?"

"I have no right to tell. You'll know soon enough."

"I withdraw my charge against Wycliff," concluded Baldwin. And Ford Hulbert withdrew.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

DEEP down in a narrow gorge echoed the sound of the miner's pick.

"Mr. Baxter," said Colonel Lathrop, one of the owners of the Rattlesnake Mine, "this is too hot a place for an old man like you. If you are determined to work as long as you live I've got other jobs that are easier for you than swinging a pick-axe in this heat all day. You know you are not obliged to work. I'll see you and your wife well taken care of as long as you live. You've done your share of the world's work. When a man reaches seventy-five he ought to rest."

"I enjoy working," replied "Old Sunshine." That was the name he was best known by among his fellow-laborers. "It'll be time enough for me to stop work when I have to. Even if I have done work enough, I have not worked for you so long that you can afford to pension me off."

"Never mind that. I would enjoy

Digitized by Google

paying you your wages better if you would quit mining. If you are bound to stick to the mines, why not work in the 'drift' with the boys, where the sun cannot hit you? It's fearfully hot out here."

"Now don't worry any more about me," said Old Sunshine, laughing. "Don't you see I'm only prospecting? I want to find out what is under the face of this cliff."

"Well, promise me you will quit at four o'clock, anyway, Baxter."

And Old Sunshine reluctantly promised.

"McDonald," said the Colonel to the foreman, as he was leaving the mine: "Don't forget that Old Sunshine is a privileged character. I don't want him to work, and had rather pay him for resting. He has been in the mines over fifty years,—was a forty-niner,—but if he's bound to work let him take his own time, and come and go when he pleases. Give him full time, anyway."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the boss. "Nobody will interfere with Old Sun-

Digitized by Google

shine. He does more work now than some of the young fellows, if he is seventy-five."

Old Sunshine had had a checkered career. More than once he had been wealthy, and that wealth, which sometimes comes suddenly in the mines, had flown as suddenly as it came. Had he known the right time to stop, to turn his mining investments into other and more stable securities, he might be living in luxury on his interest money. As it was, he was dependent upon his day's wages at seventy-five, and partly because of his independent spirit, and partly from his robust health and love of work, he refused to let Colonel Lathrop make life easier for him.

It was two o'clock. Still the clink of Old Sunshine's pick sounded steadily in the gulch. The other miners were working in the drifts or levels. Still the torrid heat rained down upon the solitary miner, upon the heated rocks, and upon the rattlesnakes, the original settlers and owners of the gulch.

Digitized by Google

Soon Old Sunshine's practiced eye told him that he was reaching a richer rock than before. Near the foot of the bank he was gradually uncovering a broad band of dull yellow. He knew what that meant,—one of the richest veins he had ever seen in his half-century of gold-mining. Another man would have dropped his pick and called the other miners to witness his discovery. But not a word from Old Sunshine.

It was three o'clock. He began to wield the pick-axe higher up the bank. The material there was soft or "rotten rock," and at four o'clock he had his rich find at the base of the cliff completely hidden from sight with the worthless rock which he had loosened from above.

"I promised the Colonel I'd quit at four o'clock," he said to the boss who passed just then. "I suppose I must keep my word."

"Aye, aye, that's all right, Old Sunshine; perfectly right. You've had a scorcher here to-day," replied the boss,

Digitized by Google

without a suspicion of the wealth which lay near him. Old Sunshine never gave him a hint of his find.

Then began the weary climb out of the gorge. This was the point at which Old Sunshine most realized that he was well on the down-hill side of life. He could still do a fair day's work, but he could not, as formerly, do a day's work and still have a large reserve of strength left over. He climbed awhile, and then sat down to rest. Then he climbed again. Occasionally a serpent made way for him, shaking his rattles, more as a warning than a threat. He reached his own cabin at last.

"What brings you home so early?" asked his wife.

"The Colonel made me promise to quit early. He don't like to have me work. He says he would take care of us and I guess he would, but I don't like to let him. Please get me a lunch and then I must go down and see the Colonel.

"What? Walk six miles to-night?"

"Yes, I can do it; it may make a big

Digitized by Google

difference to the Colonel. After he went home I struck a rich vein, and I want him to know it as soon as possible. The other miners do not know it. Do not tell them. I think the vein runs off across the old 'Dead Open and Shut' claim. The Colonel can buy that claim for a few thousand dollars now, but after this strike gets noised abroad he may not be able to buy it at all If I can give the Colonel warning so he can buy the Dead Open and Shut claim cheap, and if he makes a good thing out of it, then I can accept a pension from him, not as charity, but as my just due. Don't expect me till morning. Good night."

Luckily for the old man his journey was almost all down hill. The whole country thereabouts was a desert for the want of water. In those small sections where irrigation had been employed the land was very productive.

Old Sunshine plodded on. The sands were hot. The air was hotter. There was little beside his path to attract attention except here and there a cac-

Digitized by Google

tus plant. Beyond the distant mountains, across the valley, the sun was setting in glory. The memory of the past years, of fortunes he had made and lost, came to him again. It was because these memories did not make him gloomy and sour, but because his hopeful nature triumphed over them, that he had won the title of Old Sunshine, and none of earth's monarchs had a grander title.

It began to grow dark in the desert, but the western mountain-tops were still glorious. And then there came to the old man the words which had cheered him so often:

"At evening time it shall be light."

The day of his life had been full of storms. Would its evening be peaceful and light?

Steady plodding brought him to Emerald Valley, or as it was better known, Lathrop's Miracle, a desert like the rest until the Colonel's enterprise had made it a paradise. He had dug a canal, tapping the river miles above, and the water had turned the desert into a very Eden

Digitized by Google

of luxuriance. Everything which the Colonel could grow brought a high price in the near-by mining camps. He had spent many thousands of dollars in this private enterprise of changing the desert into a garden, and his efforts had met the success which they deserved. Every dollar spent by Colonel Lathrop in irrigation had returned to him leading others with it.

The Colonel and his family were at their evening meal.

"If here isn't Old Sunshine!" exclaimed little Daisy Lathrop.

"Have you walked all the way from the Rattlesnake?" asked the Colonel. "Nothing wrong at the mine, I hope. Make room at the table, children, for Mr. Baxter."

"Nothing wrong, Colonel—but can I see you alone a few minutes?"

"Certainly. Come this way." The Colonel led the way to a room which was both office and library to him.

"What's up?" he asked.

"I struck a rich vein after you left,

Digitized by Google

but I managed to keep it hidden from the other men. I believe the vein runs off across the old Dead Open and Shut claim. I thought perhaps you would like to buy that claim before the public gets wind of the strike."

Old Sunshine then exhibited specimens of the gold which he had found.

"Of course I can't say how far the vein extends. You will have to take your chances on that, but it is the richest vein I have ever seen in all my fifty years of mining."

"You're a brick, Old Sunshine. I'll close a bargain for the Dead Open and Shut to-night if I can. Winklereid tried to sell it to me today for ten thousand dollars. Here, Martha," he called to his wife, "please take the best care you can of our friend here. He must be pretty well used up."

In five minutes the Colonel was astride his best horse and galloping toward the village. He dismounted in front of the real estate office, hitched his horse, stood still a moment to cool down and to brush

Digitized by Google

off the appearance of hurry and excitement, and then entered. He seated himself leisurely and began exchanging banter with the loungers in the office.

Presently Mr. Winklereid, the real estate dealer, spoke to him:

"Here's Mr. Hammersley, who has just bought the Coyote Mine. I hope he may make a million out of it. And this man," continued Winklereid, waving his hand toward Colonel Lathrop, "can make more money out of desert land and river water than anyone else in the state can make out of gold-mining."

"All joking aside," replied Colonel Lathrop, "irrigation is a dead sure thing when compared with gold-mining, which is scarcely better than a lottery."

"The Colonel," pursued Mr. Winklereid, "is the father of irrigation in this state. For that reason, among others, his name is being pressed upon Governor Brown for appointment to the United States Senate, to succeed Senator Smith, who died the other day."

The Colonel did not want to talk poli-

Digitized by Google

tics. After wishing Mr. Hammersley success, he said :—

"Now, Winklereid, watch out for a little place for me, near the village. I want a place where a man of seventy-five can spend his remaining days in ease and comfort."

"I've got it now," replied Winklereid. "The very thing, snug and tidy, in good repair, right in the village, convenient to everything."

"Hold it for me till we can look at it. I'm in a hurry to-night." And the Colonel seemed on the point of leaving.

"You'd better take me up on that Dead Open and Shut bargain, Colonel. It's worth more to you than anyone else."

"Haven't I enough invested in desert rocks already?" asked the Colonel. "Besides," he continued, "Wycliff is my mining partner. I want him to share my chances of making a dollar at mining. But for his bravery I might be poor to-day. How soon do you want your money?"

Digitized by Google

"Pay me any sum you please to-night, and I'll give you a bond for a deed before you leave the office."

"Here's five hundred dollars I took in for cattle to-day. I'll pay you the rest in thirty days. Is that satisfactory?"

"Perfectly."

Half an hour later the Colonel was galloping toward home with the precious bond in his pocket.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

SHERIFF COGGSWELL'S family apartments were in the front part of the jail building, and here he entertained his old friend, Wycliff, until the notice came from Congressman Baldwin that he made no charge against him. Wycliff then thanked the Sheriff and his family, and walked out upon the streets of Elmfield, a free man.

At the gateway of the jail-grounds he was met by a messenger from Papyrus bearing a telegram from Colonel Lathrop :—

"Rich vein struck at the Rattlesnake. Syndicate offers one million for mine. Full particulars by letter."

Wycliff's acquaintances—and he had many among all classes in Elmfield—were surprised at seeing him at large, and congratulations and inquiries were of frequent occurence. But he saw something which made him, for the moment, unconscious of the attentions of friend or

Digitized by Google

foe,—a pretty pony, drawing a cart in which were several children.

Wycliff stopped suddenly. His memory went back to a scene in a sick-room not many months before, and to a promise which he had forgotten. For a time he had been unable to keep the promise. Recently he had been able to keep his promise, but had forgotten it. He wandered down the main street of Elmfield, and then off down a side street, to a livery and sale stable.

"Do you keep those little ponies, such as children drive?" he asked the proprietor, an old acquaintance.

"No, there is too little call for them, but I order them when wanted. Do you want one?"

"Yes, a perfectly gentle and safe one, as my boy is not very strong. I am going over to Cook's for a cart, and to Brandon's for a harness. Please send the pony to Brandon's to be fitted with a harness; get the cart, and send the outfit to my place, ready for use."

When these purchases had been made,

Digitized by Google

Wycliff called upon his attorney, Lawyer Sturgis. An hour later Sheriff Coggswell was posting up a notice of attachment in the Monadnock, the principal hotel of Elmfield. As Zechariah Baldwin owned both the Elmfield *Star* and the Hotel Monadnock, the hotel could be lawfully attached for the misdeeds of the newspaper, while Massachusetts Law in a measure protects the newspaper plant from attachment.

"What does this mean?" asked the manager of the hotel.

"It means," replied the smiling sheriff, "that those who dance must pay the fiddler," and straightway he started for the "Paper Town," to serve personal notice upon the Lord of Papyrus himself. Sheriff Coggswell was the only Berkshire officer who was independent of the Baldwins—the only one who did not acknowledge the political authority of Congressman Baldwin, the political boss of the County and State. Consequently he fully enjoyed the present situation.

Digitized by Google

The case against Zechariah Baldwin came up in the Superior Court, a little later, for trial. Wycliff, the plaintiff, was ready to proceed with the case. The defendant, through his attorney, pleaded for delay.

Judge Selden, after hearing both attorneys patiently, ordered an immediate trial.

"The defendant in this case," said the Judge, "has, through his newspaper, charged the plaintiff with a very serious crime—assault with intent to kill. If he had sufficient evidence to warrant him in making such charge, in such a public manner, he has sufficient evidence for defending this action, without delay."

Then Baldwin's attorney, Lawyer Stimson, requested time to effect a settlement out of court. This was granted.

Only the attorneys for the two parties met. There was good reason for this, since a meeting of the principals would only have resulted in a wordy encounter, with nothing accomplished at last in the way of settlement. One could scarcely

Digitized by Google

imagine any business of this nature accomplished between two men who so thoroughly detested one another as did Zechariah Baldwin and John Wycliff. Nor would the settlement have fared any better if the Baldwin end of the negotiations had been left with Deacon Surface, since Wycliff regarded him as an arch-hypocrite, and he, in his turn, was looked upon as an outlaw by the Deacon.

"Well, Sturgis," began the attorney for Baldwin, "your client seems to value his reputation pretty highly. It is not often that an attachment for one hundred thousand dollars is placed in an action of this kind."

"You forget, Stimson," Lawyer Sturgis replied, "that these millionaires think a good deal of themselves, whatever value the public may set upon them. Since Wycliff is rated a millionaire, I presume he regards himself as not being on the bargain-counter any longer, but fit to have his reputation rated with that of the Baldwins. In the famous Apthorp

Digitized by Google

case you pleaded, with abundant reason, that the reputation of a millionaire was worth more than that of a poor man."

Then, seeing a puzzled expression on the face of his brother attorney, Lawyer Sturgis continued:—

"Perhaps you have not read all the latest news from the gold fields. The syndicate has raised its offer for the Rattlesnake Mine to two million dollars."

"But how does that affect this question?" asked Stimson, who was still in the dark.

"John Wycliff is a half owner in the Rattlesnake mine."

"That makes a difference."

"Wycliff would prefer to have this case go to court. He would like to show up these immaculate Baldwins — these Christian philanthropists—in their true attitude toward labor. Only one reason impels him to a private settlement. Jehu Baldwin, who would be shown up as the principal transgressor, is little more than a boy, and less to blame than his father who set him on," said Sturgis.

Digitized by Google

"But," protested Stimson, "are you not taking a great deal for granted on very slight evidence?"

"By no means," replied Sturgis. "We have full proof of every step of this whole crime, from the time when Zechariah Baldwin, on his own premises, persuaded his son Jehu to set this trap for Wycliff, until the instant when Jehu Baldwin threw his pistol upon Wycliff's lawn. A kind Providence, more than his own exertions, has placed full proof in my client's possession. You and I, Stimson, are both too old, and have won too honorable a place at the Berkshire Bar to indulge in a game of bluff, and I have something here which will convince you that I am not bluffing."

He opened his safe, and took from it a photograph.

"Do you recognize anything in that picture?"

"Yes, that is Dobbs' Corner, in Papyrus. The guide-board tells the story. 'Elmfield, six miles; Sprucemont, nine miles; Wendell, five miles.' And that

Digitized by Google

old elm—there's no mistaking that. I was out there in my auto yesterday."

"But the person?"

"Looks like Jehu Baldwin, surely, and the pistol still in his hand. But here's an important point which you might be troubled to prove. How can you prove that t h i s flash-light—for a flash-light photo it is, evidently—was taken on the night which you claim? If we assert that it was secured on some other night than the one of the riot, you cannot prove that it was taken on that identical night."

"Easily enough, Stimson. Do y o u see nothing else in the picture?"

"Y e s, some sort of a machine, or wagon, with the word 'Vesuvius' on it."

"Very well," laughed Sturgis, "that new Vesuvius road machine spent only that one night in Papyrus. It was taken on trial, proved unsatisfactory, and was next day returned to Elmfield and exchanged for another."

"But you are not going to exact the whole pound of flesh, the whole hundred

Digitized by Google

thousand?" asked Lawyer Stimson.

"Not if you will do the fair thing. If the *Star* will publish a suitable retraction of its charge against Wycliff, and an admission that the attack upon Congressman Baldwin was part of a conspiracy to drive Wycliff out of town, then we will cut our claim to ten thousand dollars. Otherwise we shall insist on the whole sum."

"I think Zack Baldwin had rather pay the whole demand than to make the acknowledgement you ask," said Stimson.

"So do I," responded Sturgis. "I never knew a Baldwin to acknowledge an injustice he had done, or to make any compensation for it unless obliged to do so by law, and being multi-millionaires, they cannot usually be compelled to do justly. Senator Dawes, the greatest advocate that ever faced a Berkshire jury, in describing a particularly mean man, once coined the expression, 'natural cussedness.' I suppose that the orthodox term, 'total depravity,' would have sounded more smoothly, but smoothness

Digitized by Google

was not what the great Senator was after. When I think of the great conspiracy against my client I cannot help using the words of the Senator. Natural cussedness is a proper term to apply to the meanness of Zack Baldwin. The words fit."

"You are rather uncharitable toward my client, are you not?" asked Stimson, laughing, and stepping to a window. Lawyer Sturgis' office was on the upper floor of the highest block in the city of Elmfield, and commanded a fine view of the city.

"Come here, Sturgis," said the other, and Sturgis stepped to the window. "There is a side of Zechariah Baldwin's character which you do not appreciate. There is the finest gift ever made to the city. Who gave that splendid building to Elmfield?"

Before them stood the Elmfield Public Library, given to the city by the Honorable Zechariah Baldwin and representing, with its contents, an expenditure of more than half a million dollars.

Digitized by Google

"You will probably think me a crank, Stimson," Sturgis replied, "but I believe the half million dollars put into that building had better have gone to the Baldwin employees. One thousand each, in cash or in a home, to five hundred workmen, would have done more good than half a million in this palatial building, in my way of thinking. It would be nearer just.

"The very fact that the Baldwins have been able, through the labor of others, in the paper industry, to pile up millions and tens of millions, for themselves and their descendants, while incidentally giving a few millions in so-called charity, this very fact, I say, is evidence that they might have paid their workmen more liberally. I tell you, Stimson, the time is coming, though you and I may not live to see it, when the lion's share of the profits in any industry will go, not to the employer, but to the worker. To accomplish this it may be necessary for the government to become the employer."

"Isn't that socialism?" asked the smil-

Digitized by Google

ing Stimson of his brother of the Bar.

"I believe that there is something vitally wrong," replied Sturgis, "in a system which permits the employer to pile up millions, tens of millions, and even hundreds of millions of dollars, while the workman, who is making these millions for him, often receives only a bare living, and frequently has nothing left for old age. With apologies to Patrick Henry, if this be socialism, make the most of it. Let me remind you of a very prominent illustration of our present system. Our government framed its tariff laws for the special benefit of the iron and steel industry, it being claimed that such laws would especially benefit the workingmen in that industry. Who received the benefit? More than two hundred millions of dollars were piled up in the hands of one man, who is now trying to unload these millions upon the public libraries of the country. Without denying the benefit of public libraries, that two hundred millions should most of it have gone to the workingmen who

Digitized by Google

created that wealth. Give the workingmen of America their just dues, and there will be no need of private gifts to libraries. Every community will be abundantly able to build its own library, and that will be better than accepting gifts from men whose wealth rightly belongs to the people."

"Would you deny the right of private property?" asked Stimson.

"The right of private property, when grossly abused, must give way to something higher,—the public good."

"If I stay longer I shall miss another appointment," said Stimson. "Your client will probably receive a check soon." And Stimson withdrew.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV.

JOHN WYCLIFF had made his plans for remaining in Papyrus. Zechariah Baldwin had paid the full amount of John Wycliff's legal demands. The latter, through the agency of his friend, Ford Hulbert, had purchased the Van Alstyne estate, comprising the old Van Alstyne homestead, numerous tenements located in different parts of the town, and several hundred acres of land on the outskirts of the town. It was the largest piece of real estate in Papyrus, except the Wesson Mills, which the all-devouring Baldwins had not secured.

Scarcely had Wycliff moved his family into the old Van Alstyne homestead, when all his plans were upset by a letter from Colonel Lathrop, proposing that he remove to Emerald Valley, and giving very substantial reasons for such proposal. The Colonel wrote in part:—

"Senator Smith recently died, and Governor Brown offers me the appoint-

Digitized by Google

ment to the U. S. Senate until the Legislature meets, when it is reasonably sure that it will elect me for the remainder of Senator Smith's unexpired term. Of course you will see the wisdom of having one of the owners of the Rattlesnake Mine resident here. I am not a statesman. I am not much of a politician, except that, in a large measure, I have footed the bills of my party here. My claims upon the people are two: First, as the father of irrigation in this region. Second, in partnership with yourself, as one of the owners of the leading gold mine in this section.

"I should like to spend a year in the Millionaires' Club, at Washington, and obtain the title of U. S. Senator for my old age. The Rattlesnake Mine, which now includes the Dead Open and Shut, is forging rapidly to the front of all gold-mining properties in the West, and there is scarcely a doubt that after I have completed the late Senator Smith's term, you could be elected to succeed me. Money makes senators, and this is as true of

Digitized by Google

the East as of the West in these days.

"I remember, as a young man, you used to be proud of New England. You used to speak of the New England love of fair play, and you would grow eloquent in praise of the New England conscience. Haven't you had enough of New England fair play? Do you want more of it?

"I saw a leading Abolitionist dragged through the streets of Boston. I learned then where the New England conscience was, and is. It was, and is, inside the New England pocket-book. Had slavery been profitable in New England we should not have had the Civil War, and slavery would still be an American institution. I fought in that war, but I cannot close my eyes to the truth. There were soldiers under my command, who, as Northern laborers, were more to be pitied than the slaves on the better class of Southern plantations.

"I remember a young man—(do you remember him?)—who was a great admirer of the Springdale *Democrat*, which

Digitized by Google

has been called the New England Bible. It is eloquent, in season and out of season, in advocating equal rights for the Southern negro and the Filipino, but never asks equal rights for the mill-hands of Papyrus. It does not hesitate to criticise the President of the United States, but its millionaire idol, Congressman Baldwin, is exempt from criticism. Can you defend this course?

Let me urge one consideration which cannot fail to have weight with you. Your physician will tell you, much better than I can, that your son's chances of living to a vigorous manhood will be much improved by coming here. Here, in all probability, he would reach a rugged maturity, and here is the mining property with which he should become familiar, as he must some day, in the natural course of events, bear a part in its management."

Wycliff had scarcely finished reading this letter to his wife, when she said:—

"There are Eva Baldwin and Ralph Cutter, apparently coming here." Only

Digitized by Google

a few days before had the newspapers announced the couple's engagement.

"I am told," said Miss Baldwin, "that you own the territory to the northward, known as the Wilderness. There are reasons, purely sentimental, why I would like to purchase a portion of it, including Pulpit Rock. Would you sell it?"

"I had not intended to sell," replied Wycliff. "I had thought of making a sheep-range of it. At the same time I intended making paths through it, as our Robert needs just the exercise which he could get there. However, if the possession of a portion of it would give pleasure to you, I suppose that I ought to sell, provided my wife agrees."

"I have no objection," said Mrs. Wycliff. "It seems to me that the Wilderness is large enough to accommodate both of us."

"We shall probably soon go West for a time," said Wycliff, "but my agent, Ford Hulbert, will attend to the matter. I think that you and he will have no difficulty. I believe the day will come, al-

Digitized by Google

though not in our time, when there will be no private ownership of land, it is subject to so many abuses."

"Amen," exclaimed Ralph Cutter. "I believe that the Lord made this earth for the enjoyment of all his people, not to have its blessings monopolized by a favored few. Government ownership of land must come, I believe, although you and I will probably not live to see it."

A little later Miss Boardman and Ford Hulbert drove up. "I don't know what you will think of Lena," said the gentleman. "She seems to be getting ambitious, wants me to buy of you one of the peaks of Twin Mountain for a summer residence. I am afraid you will not care to sell."

"It seems likely," said Wycliff, "that we shall go west to look after our mining property, leaving everything here in your care. I hope we may be able to return occasionally. If we ever build on Twin Mountain, I think one peak will be ample for our use, will it not?" he asked, addressing his wife.

Digitized by Google

"I hope we may be able to spend some time here each summer," Mrs. Wycliff replied. "If we ever do build on Twin Mountain it will be very pleasant to have you there for neighbors."

When they had gone Uncle Jerry Barnaby came to give an account of his stewardship of Twin Mountain Farm. He seemed to be hardly the same person as the woe-begone, long-faced man they had once known.

"How is your daughter?" asked Mrs. Wycliff.

"You never saw such a change in any one," said Uncle Jerry. "Pet is hardly the same woman that she was when she left Papyrus."

"What has done it? Our mountain air?"

"I don't wish to run down our mountain air; the fact is, I've seen the time when you couldn't run it down with an express train. But givin' the mountain air all the credit that belongs to it, still it's those letters from Oregon that have saved Pet. It's the old, old story,—'Tis

Digitized by Google

love that makes the world go 'round.'

"When that first letter came to Pet, from 'way up in the great Northwest, it made a little spot of color on Pet's cheeks just about as big as the first bit of color that shows in a rosebud, and that spot, or that pair of spots, have been growin' bigger ever since till now the roses are pretty much full-blown."

"When is he coming?"

"In a fortnight."

"And then?"

"They will be married, and go to his home in the Oregon woods. Pet always did like the woods, and she'll have woods a plenty there. He has hundreds of acres of forest."

"Pop," said Robbie later, as he climbed on to his father's knees, by the window, "see that pretty pony and little cart coming down the street. Say, Pop, when I was so sick did you promise me a pony and a cart, or did I dream it?"

"I promised," replied the father, but now the pony and cart were at the door.

Still later a very tired boy was resting

Digitized by Google

comfortably in his kind father's arms.

"Pop," he said, "are we really and truly rich?"

"It looks like that," replied the father, "but I was rich before."

"How is that?" asked the boy.

"Please bring me that old scrap-book, Robbie."

The boy brought it, and the father read aloud these lines:—

"I have thought myself poor since God withheld
From me His lands and gold,
Forgetting that some of his gifts excelled
Mere wealth a thousand fold.

"For what is the wealth of the teeming fields
Beside thy love, wife mine?
And measured by joy a child's love yields
What worth is a golden mine?"

THE END.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

French, C.S.
The worship of the golden calf

F8735
wor

YC 103050

M126786

955
F8735
wor

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google